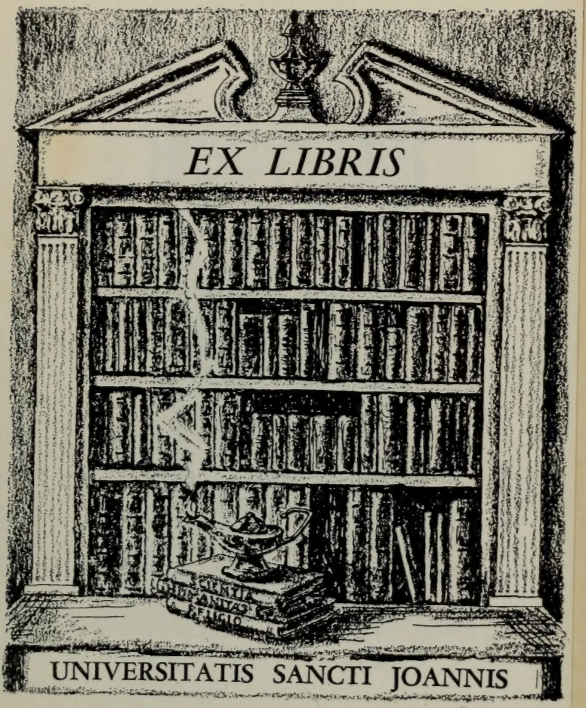
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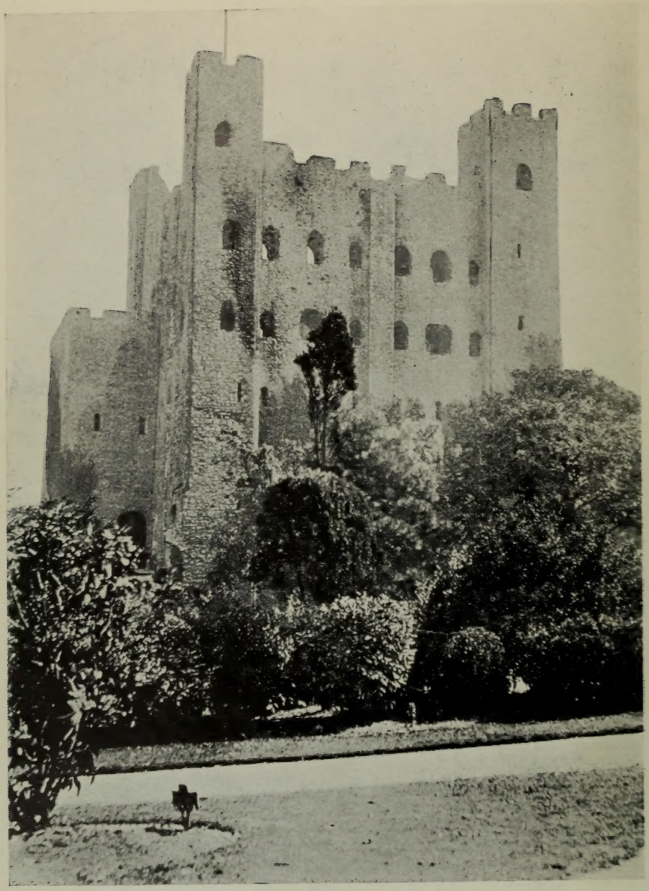
MR PICKWICK'S PILGRIMAGES



ROCHESTER CASTLE

' "Ah! fine place," said the stranger, "glorious pile—frowning walls—tottering arches—dark nooks—crumbling staircases." '

[Frontispiece.

MR PICKWICK'S PILGRIMAGES

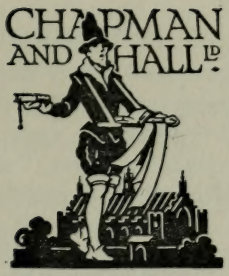
BY

WALTER DEXTER

AUTHOR OF "THE ENGLAND OF DICKENS," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY "PHIZ," AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR



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FOREWORD

By the Original Publishers

THE immortal *Pickwick Papers* may be said to boast two centenaries, the one actual, the other esoteric; and it is in celebration of the esoteric centenary that the present volume makes its appearance. For, though *Pickwick*, having been first published in its complete form in 1837, will not reach its centenary for another ten years, it is a matter of fact that the inimitable "Boz," meticulously particular in the matter of dates, mentions the 13th of May, 1827, as the day when Mr Pickwick threw open his window in Goswell Street, and let the spirit of adventure into his cheery lodgings. It was a day of peculiarly evil omen; for is not May the unluckiest month in the year, and the 13th the very unluckiest day? Mr Pickwick, however, defied augury, and has gone on defying it ever since. For ninety years the story of his pilgrimages has been the most popular of all Dickens's books, the largest seller, and the most universal provider of mirth and goodwill. Never was such a companionable crowd as that of the Pickwickians, nor one so typical of the England of a hundred years ago. Though fewer and fewer people, perhaps, every year, could take a first-class in Calverley's memorable examination paper, it is

safe to say that there is no name in English literature so immediately recognisable as that of Samuel Pickwick, and no character so ubiquitously popular. " Pickwick " is to the English novel what " Don Quixote " is to the Spanish.

It is only meet, therefore, that the centenary of Mr Pickwick's odyssey should be celebrated by his original publishers with a book which pays tribute to his infinite variety, his truly British commonsense, and his imperturbable dignity. After a hundred years, Mr Pickwick is still so much alive that innkeepers show you his bedroom, and travellers of mature habit go toiling in his footsteps. His creator has been dead for more than half a century, but after yet another century's interval he himself will be as much alive as ever. This is the true immortality, and literature is its only passport.

CHAPMAN & HALL, LTD.

INTRODUCTION

AMONG the many attributes which go to make *The Pickwick Papers* immortal, must not be forgotten the excellent services it renders as a guide book for the traveller, by road or by rail; but preferably for the traveller by road, be he pedestrian, cyclist or motorist.

The Pickwick Papers is essentially a novel of travel, and the story of its being is thus told by Dickens in his Preface.

The idea propounded to me was, that the monthly something should be a vehicle for certain plates to be executed by Mr Seymour; and there was a notion, that a "Nimrod Club," the members of which were to go out shooting, fishing, and so forth, and getting themselves into difficulties through their want of dexterity, would be the best means of introducing these. I objected, on consideration, that although born and partly bred in the country, I was no great sports-man, except in regard of all kinds of locomotion; that the idea was not novel, and had been already much used; that it would be infinitely better for the plates to arise naturally out of the text; and that I would like to take my own way, with a freer range of English scenes and people, and was afraid I should ultimately do so in any case, whatever course I might prescribe to myself at

starting. My views being deferred to, I thought of Mr Pickwick, and wrote the first number.

"Locomotion," as Dickens said, was really his strong point, and so *The Pickwick Papers*, suggested as a novel of Sport, became in Dickens's hands, a novel of Locomotion, the pre-eminent literary book of Travel. An advertisement of March 1838, undoubtedly drawn up by Dickens himself, emphasizes this position his story was to take. It reads:

"The Pickwick Club, so renowned in the annals of Huggin Lane, and so closely entwined with the thousand interesting associations connected with Lothbury and Cateaton Street, was founded in the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty-two, by Mr Samuel Pickwick—the great traveller, whose fondness for the useful arts prompted his celebrated journey to Birmingham in the depth of winter: and whose taste for the Beauties of Nature even led him to penetrate to the very borders of Wales in the height of summer.

This remarkable man would appear to have infused a considerable portion of his restless and inquiring spirit into the breasts of other Members of the Club, and to have awakened in their minds the same insatiable thirst for Travel, which so eminently characterised his own. The whole surface of Middlesex, a part of Surrey, a portion of Essex and several square miles of Kent, were in their turns examined and reported on. In a rapid steamer, they smoothly navigated the placid Thames: and in an open boat, they fearlessly crossed the turbid Medway. High-roads and bye-roads, towns and villages, public conveyances and their passengers, first-rate inns and roadside public houses, races, fairs, regattas, elections, meetings, market days—all the scenes that can

possibly occur to enliven a country place, and at which different traits of character may be observed, and recognised, were alike visited and beheld by the ardent Pickwick and his enthusiastic followers.

We are shown at the very outset "The first ray of light which illumines the gloom, and converts into a dazzling brilliancy that obscurity in which the earlier history of the public career of the immortal Pickwick would appear to be involved." And we are informed of a resolution of thanks to Mr Pickwick for his "Speculations on the Source of the Hampstead Ponds; with some observations on the Theory of Tittlebats," passed at the meeting of the Club on May 12th, 1827, some five years after its foundation; and we further read that:

Having in view the unwearied researches of Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C., in Hornsey, Highgate, Brixton, and Camberwell,—they cannot but entertain a lively sense of the inestimable benefits which must inevitably result from carrying the speculations of that learned man into a wider field, from extending his travels, and consequently enlarging his sphere of observation, to the advancement of knowledge, and the diffusion of learning.

Accordingly "The Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club" was formed, consisting of Samuel Pickwick, Tracy Tupman, Augustus Snodgrass, and Nathaniel Winkle; and the members were requested "to forward, from time to time, authenticated accounts of their journeys and investigations, of their observa-

tions of character and manners, and of the whole of their adventures, together with all tales and papers to which local scenery or associations may give rise, to the Pickwick Club, stationed in London." And we further read of a resolution to the effect "That this Association cordially recognises the principle of every member of the Corresponding Society defraying his own travelling expenses; and that it sees no objection whatever to the members of the said Society pursuing their inquiries for any length of time they please, upon the same terms."

Travelling was then—one hundred years ago—much more of a great adventure than it is to-day. To quote Mr Pickwick himself, "Travelling was in a troubled state, and the minds of coachmen were unsettled. Let them look abroad and contemplate the scenes which were enacting around them. Stage coaches were upsetting in all directions, horses were bolting, boats were overturning, and boilers were bursting." Both the Steamship and the Railway were in their infancy: but Dickens, as a lover of Travel, heralded the great delights these inventions were destined to afford.

. . . . . .

Now for the four friends who were to undertake the pilgrimages under the guidance of Mr Pickwick. First, the immortal one himself.

Who does not know Mr Pickwick: know him far better than any much pictured living celebrity?

The eloquent Pickwick . . . with bald head and circular spectacles . . . and a gigantic brain . . . working

beneath that forehead . . . with one hand gracefully concealed behind his coat tails, and the other waving in air, to assist his glowing declamation; his elevated position revealing those tights and gaiters, which, had they clothed an ordinary man, might have passed without observation, but which, when Pickwick clothed them—if we may use the expression—inspired voluntary awe and respect.

The three companions on the pilgrimages, "the men who had volunteered to share the perils of his travels, and who were destined to participate in the glories of his discoveries," are described in outline thus:

Mr Tracy Tupman—the too susceptible Tupman, who to the wisdom and experience of maturer years superadded the enthusiasm and ardour of a boy, in the most interesting and pardonable of human weaknesses—love. Time and feeding had expanded that once romantic form; the black silk waistcoat had become more and more developed; inch by inch had the gold watch-chain beneath it disappeared from within the range of Tupman's vision; and gradually had the capacious chin encroached upon the borders of the white cravat: but the soul of Tupman had known no change—admiration of the fair sex was still its ruling passion.

The poetic Snodgrass . . . enveloped in a mysterious blue coat with a canine-skin collar; and the sporting Winkle . . . communicating additional lustre to a new green shooting coat, plaid neckerchief, and closely-fitted drabs.

And so the Pickwick Pilgrimages commenced, journeys which have become famous individually; and with the aid of faithful descriptions of the routes in the pages

of *Pickwick*, so graphically described by a master pen, most enjoyable tours may be mapped out and undertaken. Although the pilgrimages were six in number, the places visited by the Pickwickians can all be seen in the course of three tours as follows:

(1) London to Rochester, Maidstone, Cobham, Gravesend, London.

(2) London to Ipswich (or Sudbury), Bury St. Edmunds, London.

(3) London to Bath, Bristol, Birmingham, Towcester, London.

THE FIRST PILGRIMAGE

HIGH STREET, ROCHESTER

[To face p. 3

THE FIRST PILGRIMAGE

To Rochester and District

I

WHETHER there was any preconceived plan in the mind of Mr Pickwick, or of any member of his party, for the various destinations of the journeys they had decided to take, is not disclosed; but the choice of Rochester as "their first halting place" was a very wise one, as there is hardly a more picturesque or a more historical town within thirty miles of the metropolis.

It seems probable that Mr Pickwick had intended to proceed farther on the great highway, on which Rochester is the first important town; perhaps Canterbury was to be their next stopping place; who knows? The places visited later were more or less left to chance; Eatanswill to the invitation of Mr Perker; Bury St. Edmunds and Ipswich to the importunities of Alfred Jingle, and Bath because they had never been there before!

But the selection of Rochester for the first stopping place was only natural, as it was the home of Dickens's boyhood, and the birthplace of his fancy. No town in Great Britain—perhaps not in all the world, so fasci-

nated a writer throughout his whole life as Rochester fascinated Dickens. He was only four years of age when the family came from Portsmouth to live in Chatham, which is adjacent to Rochester, and here they resided for seven years, and Dickens has left more than one record of the mental pictures of the city and its people made during that time. On one occasion he refers to himself as "a not very robust child, sitting in bye-places, near Rochester Castle, with a head full of Partridge, Strap, Tom Pipes and Sancho Panza," and when the time came for the father to fill a post in London, deep was his grief at parting with the city he had learnt to love so well.

His biographer, John Forster, has left us an impression of this based on an actual conversation with Dickens:

It was the birth-place of his fancy; and he hardly knew what store he had set by its busy varieties of change and scene, until he saw the falling cloud that was to hide its pictures from him for ever. The gay, bright regiments always going and coming, the continual paradings and firings, the successions of sham sieges and sham defences, the plays got up by his cousin in the hospital, the navy pay-yacht in which he had sailed to Sheerness with his father, and the ships floating out in the Medway, with their far visions of sea—he was to lose them all. He was never to watch the boys at their games any more, or see them sham over again the sham sieges and defences. He was to be taken away to London inside the stage-coach Commodore; and Kentish woods and fields, Cobham Park and Hall, Rochester Cathedral and Castle, and all the won-

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

' "*Old Cathedral too—earthy smell—pilgrims' feet worn away the old steps—little Saxon doors—confessionals like money-takers' boxes at theatres—queer customers those monks.*" '

[To face p. 4.

derful romance together, including a red-cheeked baby he had been wildly in love with, were to vanish like a dream.

Thus did Rochester become the shrine of the first Pickwickian Pilgrimage, and so commenced the Dickensian romance centered in that city. With note-book and telescope Mr Pickwick descended on Rochester, and a fund of genuine good humour, perennial in its freshness, was the immediate result; and now, a hundred years later, pilgrimages are made to the district, not so much to visit its real historical landmarks as to see those places mentioned and made famous in the immortal Pickwick Papers.

II

The first pilgrimage started " on the morning of the thirteenth of May, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven." Although it properly commenced at the Golden Cross Inn at Charing Cross, where Mr Pickwick met his friends and embarked on the Commodore Coach, yet that worthy began to meet with his adventures even earlier.

Mr Pickwick lived in Goswell Street, which, a hundred years ago, was sufficiently suburban and respectable to offer him a genteel retreat. Goswell Street ran outside the City boundary of Aldersgate from Barbican to Percival Street; the remainder of the road to the Angel at Islington was at that time called

Goswell Street Road. The whole of it is now known as Goswell Road, and the old houses to be seen there (and several still remain) closely resemble the type of house in which Mr Pickwick resided.

Mr Pickwick's apartments in Goswell Street, although on a limited scale, were not only of a very neat and comfortable description, but peculiarly adapted for the residence of a man of his genius and observation. His sitting-room was the first floor front, his bedroom the second floor front; and thus, whether he were sitting at his desk in his parlour, or standing before the dressing-glass in his dormitory, he had an equal opportunity of contemplating human nature in all the numerous phases it exhibits, in that not more populous than popular thoroughfare. . . . Cleanliness and quiet reigned throughout the house; and in it Mr Pickwick's will was law.

. . . . . ,

That punctual servant of all work, the sun, had just risen, and begun to strike a light on the morning of the thirteenth of May, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, when Mr Samuel Pickwick burst like another sun from his slumbers, threw open his chamber window, and looked out upon the world beneath. Goswell Street was at his feet, Goswell Street was on his right hand—as far as the eye could reach, Goswell Street extended on his left; and the opposite side of Goswell Street was over the way. "Such," thought Mr Pickwick, "are the narrow views of those philosophers who, content with examining the things that lie before them, look not to the truths which are hidden beyond. As well might I be content to gaze on Goswell Street for ever, without one effort to penetrate to the hidden countries which on every side surround it." And having given vent to this beautiful reflection,

GOSWELL ROAD : WHERE THE PILGRIMAGES COMMENCED

'Mr Samuel Pickwick burst like another sun from his slumbers, threw open his chamber window, and looked out upon the world beneath. Goswell Street was at his feet, Goswell Street was on his right hand—as far as the eye could reach, Goswell Street extended on his left; and the opposite side of Goswell Street was over the way.'

[To face p. 6.

Mr Pickwick proceeded to put himself into his clothes, and his clothes into his portmanteau. Great men are seldom over-scrupulous in the arrangement of their attire; the operation of shaving, dressing, and coffee-imbibing was soon performed: and in another hour, Mr Pickwick, with his portmanteau in his hand, his telescope in his great-coat pocket, and his note-book in his waistcoat, ready for the reception of any discoveries worthy of being noted down, had arrived at the coach stand in St. Martin's-le-Grand.

"Cab!" said Mr Pickwick.

"Here you are, sir," shouted a strange specimen of the human race, in a sackcloth coat, and apron of the same, who with a brass label and number round his neck, looked as if he were catalogued in some collection of rarities. This was the waterman. "Here you are, sir. Now, then, fust cab!" And the first cab having been fetched from the public-house, where he had been smoking his first pipe, Mr Pickwick and his portmanteau were thrown into the vehicle.

"Golden Cross," said Mr Pickwick.

"Only a bob's vorth, Tommy," cried the driver, sulkily, for the information of his friend the waterman, as the cab drove off.

"How old is that horse, my friend?" inquired Mr Pickwick, rubbing his nose with the shilling he had reserved for the fare.

"Forty-two," replied the driver, eyeing him askant.

"What!" ejaculated Mr Pickwick, laying his hand upon his note-book. The driver reiterated his former statement. Mr Pickwick looked very hard at the man's face, but his features were immovable, so he noted down the fact forthwith.

"And how long do you keep him out at a time?" inquired Mr Pickwick, searching for further information.

"Two or three veeks," replied the man.

"Weeks!" said Mr Pickwick in astonishment—and out came the note-book again.

"He lives at Pentonwil when he's at home," observed the driver, coolly, "but we seldom takes him home, on account of his veakness."

"On account of his weakness!" reiterated the perplexed Mr Pickwick.

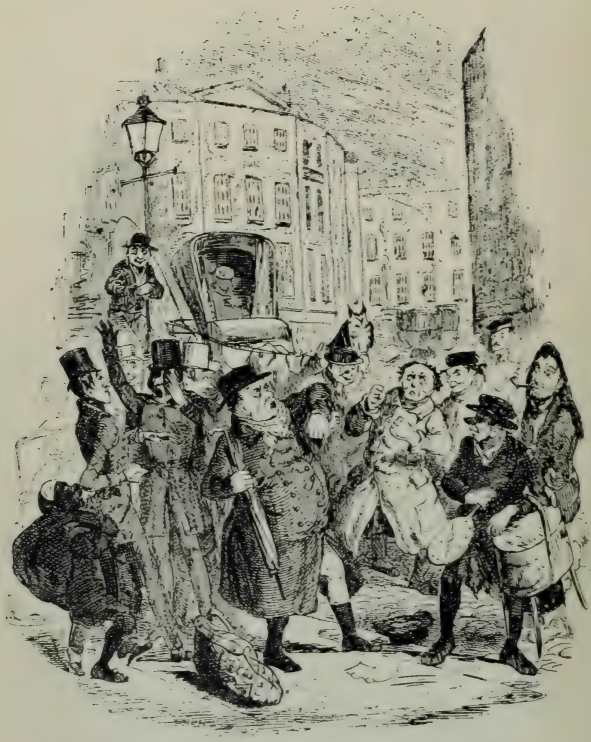
"He always falls down when he's took out o' the cab," continued the driver, "but when he's in it, we bears him up werry tight, and takes him in werry short, so as he can't werry well fall down; and we've got a pair o' precious large wheels on, so ven he *does* move, they run after him, and he must go on—he can't help it."

Mr Pickwick entered every word of this statement in his note-book, with the view of communicating it to the club, as a singular instance of the tenacity of life in horses, under trying circumstances. The entry was scarcely completed when they reached the Golden Cross. Down jumped the driver, and out got Mr Pickwick. Mr Tupman, Mr Snodgrass, and Mr Winkle, who had been anxiously waiting the arrival of their illustrious leader, crowded to welcome him.

"Here's your fare," said Mr Pickwick, holding out the shilling to the driver.

What was the learned man's astonishment, when that unaccountable person flung the money on the pavement, and requested in figurative terms to be allowed the pleasure of fighting him (Mr Pickwick) for the amount! . . .

"Would anybody believe," said the cab-driver, appealing to the crowd,—"Would anybody believe as an informer 'ud go about in a man's cab, not only takin' down his number, but ev'ry word he says into the bargain"—(a light flashed upon Mr Pickwick: it was the note-book) . . .—"and then arter aggerawatin'



MR PICKWICK'S FIRST ADVENTURE:
AT THE "GOLDEN CROSS" HOTEL, CHARING CROSS

[To face p. 9.

me to assault him, gets three witnesses here to prove it. But I'll give it him, if I've six months for it. Come on," and the cabman dashed his hat upon the ground, with a reckless disregard of his own private property, and knocked Mr Pickwick's spectacles off, and followed up the attack with a blow on Mr Pickwick's nose, and another on Mr Pickwick's chest, and a third in Mr Snodgrass's eye, and a fourth, by way of variety, in Mr Tupman's waistcoat, and then danced into the road, and then back again to the pavement, and finally dashed the whole temporary supply of breath out of Mr Winkle's body; and all in half-a-dozen seconds.

The situation was saved by the timely arrival of a stranger, who dispersed the crowd with a peculiar volubility and then led the way to the travellers' waiting-room, whither he was closely followed by Mr Pickwick and his disciples.

"Here, waiter," shouted the stranger, ringing the bell with tremendous violence, "glasses round,—brandy and water, hot and strong, and sweet, and plenty,—eye damaged, sir? Waiter; raw beef-steak for the gentleman's eye,—nothing like raw beef-steak for a bruise, sir; cold lamp-post very good, but lamp-post inconvenient—damned odd standing in the open street half an hour, with your eye against a lamp-post—eh,—very good—ha! ha!" And the stranger, without stopping to take breath, swallowed at a draught full half a pint of the reeking brandy and water, and flung himself into a chair with as much ease as if nothing uncommon had occurred.

This was Alfred Jingle, strolling player and adventurer, henceforward destined to play an important part in the adventures of the Pickwickians.

He was about the middle height, but the thinness of his body, and the length of his legs, gave him the appearance of being much taller. The green coat had been a smart dress garment in the days of swallow-tails, but had evidently in those times adorned a much shorter man than the stranger, for the soiled and faded sleeves scarcely reached to his wrists. It was buttoned closely up to his chin, at the imminent hazard of splitting the back; and an old stock, without a vestige of shirt collar, ornamented his neck. His scanty black trousers displayed here and there those shiny patches which bespeak long service, and were strapped very tightly over a pair of patched and mended shoes, as if to conceal the dirty white stockings, which were nevertheless distinctly visible. His long black hair escaped in negligent waves from beneath each side of his old pinched up hat; and glimpses of his bare wrist might be observed, between the tops of his gloves, and the cuffs of his coat sleeves. His face was thin and haggard; but an indescribable air of jaunty impudence and perfect self-possession pervaded the whole man.

The thanks of Mr Pickwick for the great assistance rendered was interrupted by the entrance of the Rochester coachman, to announce that "The Commodore" was on the point of starting.

"Commodore!" said the stranger, starting up, "my coach,—place booked,—one outside—leave you to pay for the brandy and water,—want change for a five,—bad silver—Brummagem buttons—won't do—no go—eh?" and he shook his head most knowingly.

Now it so happened that Mr Pickwick and his three companions had resolved to make Rochester their first halting-place too; and having intimated to their newfound acquaintance that they were journeying to the

same city, they agreed to occupy the seat at the back of the coach, where they could all sit together.

"Up with you," said the stranger, assisting Mr Pickwick on to the roof with so much precipitation as to impair the gravity of that gentleman's deportment very materially.

"Any luggage, sir?" inquired the coachman.

"Who—I? Brown paper parcel here, that's all,—other luggage gone by water,—packing cases, nailed up—big as houses—heavy, heavy, damned heavy," replied the stranger, as he forced into his pocket as much as he could of the brown paper parcel, which presented most suspicious indications of containing one shirt and a handkerchief.

The hotel from which the "Commodore" coach started, and with which Dickens was familiar in his youth, when working at the Blacking Warehouse near by, was pulled down in 1830. It originally stood on about the site now occupied by the Nelson Monument. The name Golden Cross is still preserved in the hotel which faces Charing Cross Railway Station. It has been considerably modernised since it was built about a century ago; the courtyard is still there, but the galleries around have been closed in and form modern passages. The archway through which the coaches had to pass into the street gave rise to the first of the many stories of Mr Jingle:

"Heads, heads—take care of your heads!" cried the loquacious stranger, as they came out under the low archway, which in those days formed the entrance to the coach-yard. "Terrible place—dangerous work—other day—five children—mother—tall lady, eating

sandwiches—forgot the arch—crash—knock—children look round—mother's head off—sandwich in her hand—no mouth to put it in—head of a family off—shocking, shocking! Looking at Whitehall, sir?—fine place—little window—somebody else's head off there, eh, sir?—he didn't keep a sharp look-out enough either—eh, sir, eh?"

"I am ruminating," said Mr Pickwick, "on the strange mutability of human affairs."

"Ah! I see—in at the palace door one day, out at the window the next. Philosopher, sir?"

"An observer of human nature, sir," said Mr Pickwick.

"Ah, so am I. Most people are when they've little to do and less to get."

III

Although some of the coaches from the West End of London joined the Dover Road by way of London Bridge, yet it is well to remember that the "Commodore" proceeded over Westminster Bridge, and via the Elephant & Castle for the Old Kent Road, on account of Jingle's remark concerning the "little window" at Whitehall, which of course was the window from which King Charles walked to the scaffold: a tablet beneath it marks the spot.

There was an intermediate stage to Rochester in those days—Dartford: but Dickens is so taken away with the entertaining stories of Mr Jingle concerning Ponto, the wonderful dog, and Donna Christina, the lovely Spanish lady, that he forgets to give us any account of the road he even then knew so well, and

which he was to know even better as years went on. It was along this road that David Copperfield trudged his weary way to Dover: at the Obelisk—now removed and replaced by a clock tower—he lost his luggage and a half guinea, and at Webb's County Terrace in the New Kent Road, he stopped to rest and to cry for some time. Somewhere in the Old Kent Road he sold his "weskit" to Mr Dolloby, and then at night when he had come out on to Blackheath, he searched for his old school, Salem House, and finding a haystack in a corner by the wall, he lay down by it and fell asleep, dreaming of Steerforth, and Traddles, and his other companions.

And so with little David for a companion, to make up for the stories which Jingle must have told in order to beguile the long hours, but which are not recorded, we emerge from the streets of London, out upon the open heath, and ascend Shooter's Hill, there to encounter another Dickens picture in the scene of the Dover Coach "lumbering up" Shooter's Hill on a Friday night in November, 1775, fearful of highwaymen, when "the guard suspected the passengers, the passengers suspected one another and the guard, they all suspected everybody else, and the coachman was sure of nothing but the horses." This the reader will find in the second chapter of *A Tale of Two Cities*, as fine a scene of the stage coach days as was ever penned.

At Crayford, a couple of miles short of Dartford, a new road now runs to Rochester, following the course of the old Roman Watling Street; but ours is the old road to the left, hugging the River Thames nearly all the way.

A change of horses was undoubtedly made at Dartford, probably at the "Bull"—even to-day a rare old coaching house, much as it was of old: and then the coach proceeded to Gravesend and past Chalk—and the cottage at the far end of the village where Dickens spent his honeymoon, soon after the first part of *The Pickwick Papers* had been published.

The road, which until now has been dull and uninteresting, improves in picturesqueness, with fine views over the river on the left, and presently joins the new road referred to above. It was a road Dickens knew full well, for just here, on the top of Gad's Hill, where at the Falstaff Inn the horses were no doubt watered, stands Gad's Hill Place, the house beloved by Dickens ever since he was a little boy, which he bought in later years, and where he died one bright June day in 1870.

Years before it became his home—indeed from his very earliest years when a small boy at Chatham—he conceived a great attachment to the house. He used to like to be taken out to see it by his father, and it was a cherished ambition of his life to be in a position to buy the house and live there.

He has confirmed this in his paper "Travelling Abroad" in *The Uncommercial Traveller*, in which, as he is journeying along the road to Dover, there crosses it a vision of himself:

So smooth was the old highroad, and so fresh were the horses, and so fast went I, that it was midway between Gravesend and Rochester, and the widening

GADS HILL

' " *This is Gadshill we are coming to, where Falstaff went out to rob those travellers, and ran away.*" '

[To face p. 14.

DICKENS'S HOUSE, GADS HILL

'"*But do let us stop at the top of the hill, and look at the house there, if you please!*"'

[To face p. 15.

river was bearing the ships, white-sailed or black-smoked, out to sea, when I noticed by the wayside a very queer small boy.

"Holloa!" said I, to the very queer small boy, "where do you live?"

"At Chatham," says he.

"What do you do there?" says I.

"I go to school," says he.

I took him up in a moment, and we went on. Presently, the very queer small boys says, "This is Gadshill we are coming to, where Falstaff went out to rob those travellers, and ran away."

"You know something about Falstaff, eh?" said I.

"All about him," said the very queer small boy. "I am old (I am nine), and I read all sorts of books. But *do* let us stop at the top of the hill, and look at the house there, if you please!"

"You admire that house?" said I.

"Bless you, sir," said the very queer small boy, "when I was not more than half as old as nine, it used to be a treat for me to be brought to look at it. And now I am nine, I come by myself to look at it. And ever since I can recollect, my father, seeing me so fond of it, has often said to me, 'If you were to be very persevering, and were to work hard, you might some day come to live in it.' Though that's impossible!" said the very queer small boy, drawing a low breath, and now staring at the house out of window with all his might.

I was rather amazed to be told this by the very queer small boy; for that house happens to be *my* house, and I have reason to believe that what he said was true.

A sharp run down takes us, through the smoke of Strood, into the delightful city of Rochester.

These digressions, although Dickensian, are not

Pickwickian, but they serve to beguile the thirty miles into Rochester, equally as well as Jingle's stories, for we read:

In this strain, with an occasional glass of ale, by way of parenthesis, when the coach changed horses, did the stranger proceed, until they reached Rochester Bridge, by which time the note-book both of Mr Pickwick and Mr Snodgrass were completely filled with selections from their adventures. "Magnificent ruin!" said Mr Augustus Snodgrass, with all the poetic fervour that distinguished him, when they came in sight of the fine old castle.

"What a study for an antiquarian," were the very words which fell from Mr Pickwick's mouth, as he applied his telescope to his eye.

"Ah! fine place," said the stranger, "glorious pile—frowning walls—tottering arches—dark nooks—crumbling staircases.—Old Cathedral too—earthly smell—pilgrims' feet worn away the old steps—little Saxon doors—confessionals like money-takers' boxes at theatres—queer customers those monks—Popes, and Lord Treasurers, and all sorts of old fellows, with great red faces, and broken noses, buff jerkins too—matchlocks—Sarcophagus—fine place—old legends too—strange stories; capital"; and the stranger continued to soliloquize until they reached the Bull Inn in the High Street, where the coach stopped.

"Do you remain here, sir?" inquired Mr Nathaniel Winkle.

"Here—not I—but you had better—good house—nice beds—Wright's next house, dear—very dear—half a crown in the bill if you look at the waiter—charge you more if you dine at a friend's, than they would if you dined in the coffee-room—rum fellows—very."

THE BULL INN, ROCHESTER

'The stranger continued to soliloquize until they reached the Bull Inn in the High Street, where the coach stopped. "Do you remain here, sir?" inquired Mr Nathaniel Winkle. "Here—not I—but you had better—good house—nice beds."'

[To face p. 16.

STAIRCASE AT THE BULL, ROCHESTER

' " Devil of a mess on the staircase—forms going up—carpenters coming down—lamp, glasses, harps." '

[To face p. 17.

Wright's, to which Jingle refers, was the Crown, at the foot of Rochester Bridge.

Before they parted Mr Pickwick addressed the stranger:

"You rendered us a very important service this morning, sir," said he, "will you allow us to offer a slight mark of our gratitude by begging the favour of your company at dinner?"

"Great pleasure—not presume to dictate, but broiled fowl and mushrooms—capital thing! what time?"

"Let me see," replied Mr Pickwick, referring to his watch, "it is now nearly three. Shall we say five?"

"Suit me excellently," said the stranger, "five precisely—till then—care of yourselves"; and lifting the pinched-up hat a few inches from his head, and carelessly replacing it very much on one side, the stranger, with half the brown paper parcel sticking out of his pocket, walked briskly up the yard, and turned into the High Street. . . .

IV

A private sitting-room having been engaged, bedrooms inspected, and dinner ordered, the party walked out to view the city and adjoining neighbourhood.

We do not find, from a careful perusal of Mr Pickwick's notes on the four towns, Stroud, Rochester, Chatham, and Brompton that his impressions of their appearance differ in any material point from those of other travellers who have gone over the same ground. His general description is easily abridged.

"The principal productions of these towns," says Mr Pickwick, "appear to be soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers, and dockyard men. The

commodities chiefly exposed for sale in the public streets are marine stores, hardbake, apples, flat-fish, and oysters. The streets present a lively and animated appearance, occasioned chiefly by the conviviality of the military. It is truly delightful to a philanthropic mind, to see these gallant men staggering along under the influence of an overflow, both of animal and ardent spirits; more especially when we remember that the following them about, and jesting with them, affords a cheap and innocent amusement for the boy population. Nothing (adds Mr Pickwick) can exceed their good humour. It was but the day before my arrival that one of them had been most grossly insulted in the house of a publican. The barmaid had positively refused to draw him any more liquor; in return for which he had (merely in playfulness) drawn his bayonet, and wounded the girl in the shoulder. And yet this fine fellow was the very first to go down to the house next morning, and express his readiness to overlook the matter, and forget what had occurred.

"The consumption of tobacco in these towns (continues Mr Pickwick) must be very great: and the smell which pervades the streets must be exceedingly delicious to those who are extremely fond of smoking. A superficial traveller might object to the dirt which is their leading characteristic; but to those who view it as an indication of traffic and commercial prosperity, it is truly gratifying."

Another description of Rochester, given at a later date, is not out of place here. It was the day after the Review on Chatham Lines (see page 30):

Bright and pleasant was the sky, balmy the air, and beautiful the appearance of every object around, as Mr Pickwick leant over the balustrades of Rochester

ROCHESTER CASTLE FROM THE BRIDGE

'Behind it rose the ancient castle, its towers roofless, and its massive walls crumbling away, but telling us proudly of its own might and strength, as when, seven hundred years ago, it rang with a clash of arms, or resounded with the noise of feasting and revelry.'

[To face p. 19.

Bridge, contemplating nature, and waiting for breakfast. The scene was indeed one which might well have charmed a far less reflective mind, than that to which it was presented.

On the left of the spectator lay the ruined wall, broken in many places, and in some, overhanging the narrow beach below in rude and heavy masses. Huge knots of sea-weed hung upon the jagged and pointed stones, trembling in every breath of wind; and the green ivy clung mournfully round the dark and ruined battlements. Behind it rose the ancient castle, its towers roofless, and its massive walls crumbling away, but telling us proudly of its own might and strength, as when, seven hundred years ago, it rang with a clash of arms, or resounded with the noise of feasting and revelry. On either side, the banks of the Medway, covered with cornfields and pastures, with here and there a windmill, or a distant church, stretched away as far as the eye could see, presenting a rich and varied landscape, rendered more beautiful by the changing shadows which passed swiftly across it, as the thin and half-formed clouds skimmed away in the light of the morning sun. The river, reflecting the clear blue of the sky, glistened and sparkled as it flowed noiselessly on; and the oars of the fishermen dipped into the water with a clear and liquid sound, as the heavy but picturesque boats glided slowly down the stream.

Mr Pickwick was roused from the agreeable reverie into which he had been led by the objects before him, by a deep sigh, and a touch on his shoulder. He turned round: and the dismal man was at his side. . . .

"Did it ever strike you, on such a morning as this, that drowning would be happiness and peace?"

"God bless me, no!" replied Mr Pickwick, edging a little from the balustrade, as the possibility of the dismal man's tipping him over, by way of experiment, occurred to him rather forcibly.

The old bridge, alas, has gone: one of the stone balustrades, perhaps the very one from which Mr Pickwick edged away, was presented to Dickens, and used by him as a pedestal for a sundial, at Gad's Hill.

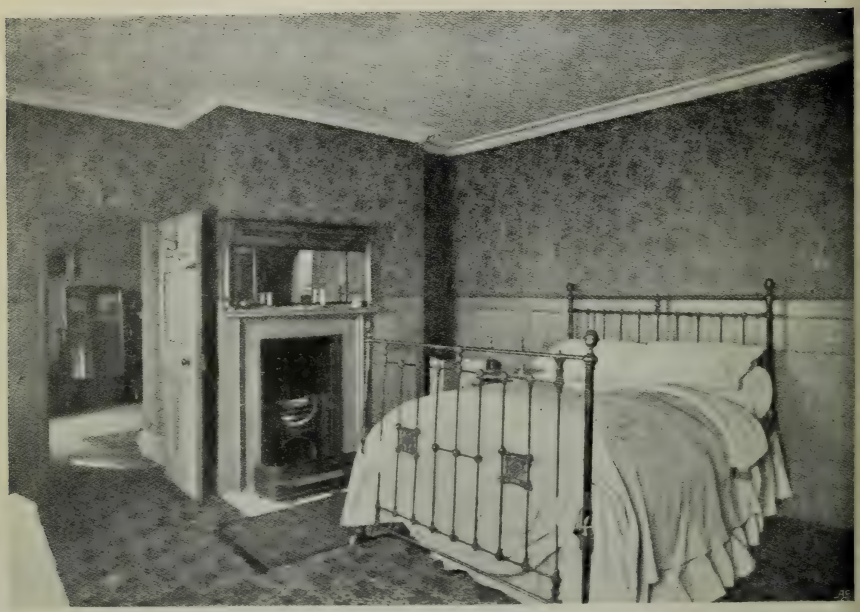
The Bull at Rochester is THE attraction of the city, for it is no doubt a fact that visitors on reaching the city always make their first enquiry to be shown The Bull Hotel, the Staircase forming the scene between Jingle and Dr Slammer, the Ball-room and the Bedrooms of Winkle and Tupman, the one inside the other, before they give a thought to the antiquities of the beautiful Cathedral, and the grand old Castle; and even when they do visit that sacred edifice, their thoughts more often than not are with John Jasper and the mystery surrounding the disappearance of Edwin Drood.

It may interest visitors to The Bull to know that Room 13 is assigned to Tupman. "Winkle's bedroom is inside mine," said Mr Tupman. That makes Winkle's room No. 19. Pickwick slept in No. 17, where Dickens himself slept on more than one occasion.

Entering the hotel by its courtyard, we find the broad old winding staircase which attracted the attention of Jingle: "Devil of a mess on the staircase—Forms going up—carpenters coming down—lamp, glasses, harps."

A charity ball was the cause of the commotion, and upstairs we find the ballroom, now used as the coffee-room—"a long room with crimson covered benches, and wax candles in glass chandeliers. The musicians were securely confined in an elevated den."

How Mr Jingle, arrayed in Winkle's dress coat,



THE COMMUNICATING BEDROOMS AT THE BULL, ROCHESTER

' " *Winkle's bedroom is inside mine," said Mr Tupman;* " *I couldn't make him understand what I wanted, if I woke him now, but I know he has a dress suit, in a carpet-bag, and supposing you wore it to the ball, and took it off when we returned, I could replace it without troubling him at all about the matter.*" '

[To face p. 21.

danced with the Widow Budger, greatly to the annoyance of Dr Slammer, who challenged Winkle to a duel on the following morning: how the duel was fought at Chatham, by Fort Pitt, the following extracts will show:

V

The temptation to be present at the ball, and to form his first impressions of the beauty of the Kentish ladies, was strong upon Mr Tupman. The temptation to take the stranger with him was equally great. He was wholly unacquainted with the place, and its inhabitants; and the stranger seemed to possess as great a knowledge of both as if he had lived there from his infancy. Mr Winkle was asleep, and Mr Tupman had had sufficient experience in such matters to know that the moment he awoke he would, in the ordinary course of nature, roll heavily to bed. He was undecided. "Fill your glass, and pass the wine," said the indefatigable visitor.

Mr Tupman did as he was requested; and the additional stimulus of the last glass settled his determination.

"Winkle's bedroom is inside mine," said Mr Tupman; "I couldn't make him understand what I wanted, if I woke him now, but I know he has a dress suit, in a carpet-bag, and supposing you wore it to the ball, and took if off when we returned, I could replace it without troubling him at all about the matter."

"Capital," said the stranger, "famous plan—damned odd situation—fourteen coats in the packing-cases, and obliged to wear another man's—very good notion, that—very."

"We must purchase our tickets," said Mr Tupman.

"Not worth while splitting a guinea," said the stranger, "toss who shall pay for both—I call; you spin —first time—woman—woman—bewitching woman," and down came the sovereign, with the Dragon (called by courtesy a woman) uppermost.

Mr Tupman rang the bell, purchased the tickets, and ordered chamber candlesticks. In another quarter of an hour the stranger was completely arrayed in a full suit of Mr Nathaniel Winkle's.

"It's a new coat," said Mr Tupman, as the stranger surveyed himself with great complacency in a cheval glass; "the first that's been made with our club button," and he called his companion's attention to the large gilt button which displayed a bust of Mr Pickwick in the centre, and the letters "P.C." on either side.

"P. C.," said the stranger,—"Queer set out—old fellow's likeness, and 'P. C.'—What does P. C. stand for—Peculiar Coat, eh?" Mr Tupman, with rising indignation, and great importance, explained the mystic device.

Thus arrayed, they made their way to the Ball-room on the first floor.

It was a long room, with crimson-covered benches, and wax candles in glass chandeliers. The musicians were securely confined in an elevated den, and quadrilles were being systematically got through by two or three sets of dancers. Two card-tables were made up in the adjoining card-room, and two pair of old ladies, and a corresponding number of stout gentlemen, were executing whist therein.

The finale concluded, the dancers promenaded the room, and Mr Tupman and his companion stationed themselves in a corner, to observe the company.

THE BALL-ROOM, BULL INN, ROCHESTER

'It was a long room, with crimson-covered benches, and wax candles in glass chandeliers. The musicians were securely confined in an elevated den.'

[To face p. 23.

"Charming women," said Mr Tupman.

"Wait a minute," said the stranger, "fun presently —nobs not come yet—queer place—Dock-yard people of upper rank don't know Dock-yard people of lower rank—Dock-yard people of lower rank don't know small gentry—small gentry don't know tradespeople—Commissioner don't know anybody."

. . . . . .

One of the most popular personages, in his own circle, present was a little fat man, with a ring of upright black hair round his head, and an extensive bald plain on the top of it—Doctor Slammer, surgeon to the 97th. The Doctor took snuff with everybody, chatted with everybody, laughed, danced, made jokes, played whist, did everything, and was everywhere. To these pursuits, multifarious as they were, the little Doctor added a more important one than any—he was indefatigable in paying the most unremitting and devoted attention to a little old widow, whose rich dress and profusion of ornament bespoke her a most desirable addition to a limited income.

Upon the Doctor, and the widow, the eyes of both Mr Tupman and his companion had been fixed for some time, when the stranger broke silence.

"Lots of money—old girl—pompous Doctor—not a bad idea—good fun," were the intelligible sentences which issued from his lips. Mr Tupman looked inquisitively in his face.

"I'll dance with the widow," said the stranger.

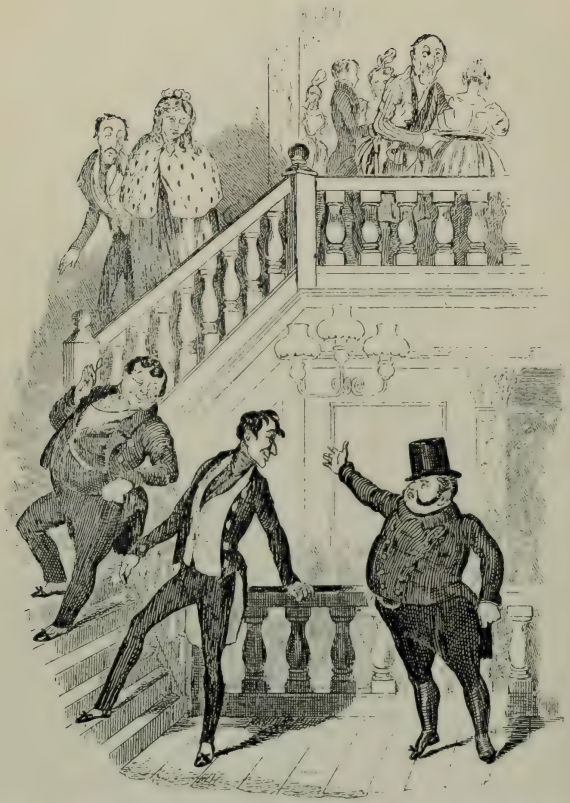
"Who is she?" inquired Mr Tupman.

"Don't know—never saw her in all my life—cut out the Doctor—here goes." And the stranger forthwith crossed the room; and, leaning against a mantel-piece, commenced gazing with an air of respectful and melancholy admiration on the fat countenance of the little

old lady. Mr Tupman looked on, in mute astonishment. The stranger progressed rapidly; the little Doctor danced with another lady; the widow dropped her fan, the stranger picked it up and presented it,—a smile—a bow—a curtsey—a few words of conversation. The stranger walked boldly up to, and returned with, the master of the ceremonies; a little introductory pantomime; and the stranger and Mrs Budger took their places in a quadrille.

The surprise of Mr Tupman at this summary proceeding, great as it was, was immeasurably exceeded by the astonishment of the doctor. The stranger was young, and the widow was flattered. The doctor's attentions were unheeded by the widow; and the doctor's indignation was wholly lost on his imperturbable rival. Doctor Slammer was paralyzed. He, Doctor Slammer of the 97th, to be extinguished in a moment, by a man whom nobody had ever seen before, and whom nobody knew even now! Doctor Slammer—Doctor Slammer of the 97th rejected! Impossible! It could not be! Yes, it was; there they were. What! introducing his friend! Could he believe his eyes! He looked again, and was under the painful necessity of admitting the veracity of his optics; Mrs Budger was dancing with Mr Tracy Tupman; there was no mistaking the fact. There was the widow before him, bouncing bodily, here and there, with unwonted vigour; and Mr Tracy Tupman hopping about, with a face expressive of the most intense solemnity, dancing (as a good many people do) as if a quadrille were not a thing to be laughed at, but a severe trial to the feelings, which it requires inflexible resolution to encounter.

Silently and patiently did the doctor bear all this, and all the handings of negus, and watching for glasses, and darting for biscuits, and coquetting, that ensued; but, a few seconds after the stranger had disappeared to lead Mrs Budger to her carriage, he darted swiftly



DR SLAMMER CHALLENGES JINGLE ON THE STAIRCASE
AT THE BULL INN, ROCHESTER

[To face p. 25.

from the room with every particle of his hitherto-bottled-up indignation effervescing, from all parts of his countenance, in a perspiration of passion.

The stranger was returning, and Mr Tupman was beside him. He spoke in a low tone, and laughed. The little doctor thirsted for his life. He was exulting. He had triumphed.

"Sir!" said the doctor, in an awful voice, producing a card, and retiring into an angle of the passage, "my name is Slammer, Doctor Slammer, Sir—97th regiment —Chatham Barracks—my card, Sir, my card." He would have added more, but his indignation choked him.

"Ah!" replied the stranger, coolly, "Slammer—much obliged—polite attention—not ill now, Slammer —but when I am—knock you up."

"You—you're a shuffler, Sir," gasped the furious doctor, "a poltroon—a coward—a liar—a—a—will nothing induce you to give me your card, Sir."

"Oh! I see," said the stranger, half aside, "negus too strong here—liberal landlord—very foolish—very—lemonade much better—hot rooms—elderly gentlemen —suffer for it in the morning—cruel—cruel"; and he moved on a step or two.

"You are stopping in this house, Sir," said the indignant little man; "you are intoxicated now, Sir; you shall hear from me in the morning, Sir. I shall find you out, Sir; I shall find you out."

"Rather you found me out, than found me at home," replied the unmoved stranger.

Doctor Slammer looked unutterable ferocity, as he fixed his hat on his head with an indignant knock: and the stranger and Mr Tupman ascended to the bedroom of the latter to restore the borrowed plumage to the unconscious Winkle.

That gentleman was fast asleep; the restoration was soon made. The stranger was extremely jocose; and

Mr Tracy Tupman, being quite bewildered with wine, negus, lights, and ladies, thought the whole affair an exquisite joke. His new friend departed; and, after experiencing some slight difficulty in finding the orifice in his night-cap, originally intended for the reception of his head, and finally overturning his candlestick in his struggles to put it on, Mr Tracy Tupman managed to get into bed, by a series of complicated evolutions, and shortly afterwards sank into repose.

VI

The following morning, Boots awoke Mr Pickwick to know which member of his party wore "a bright blue dress coat with a gilt button with P. C. on it." Mr Pickwick at once gave the information that this was Mr Winkle, "next room but two on the right hand," and Mr Tupman, in answer to the Boots, called into the inner room to Mr Winkle that he was wanted, whereupon Boots informed him there was a "Gentleman in the coffee-room . . . says he'll not detain you a moment, sir, but he can take no denial." And so the astonished Winkle learned from the officer in undress uniform in the coffee-room below, that he had misconducted himself the night before, and given mortal offence to one Doctor Slammer, who demanded either a written apology—or—"of course you know the alternative."

"Were you intrusted with this message to me by name?" inquired Mr Winkle. . . .

"I was not present myself," replied the visitor, "and in consequence of your firm refusal to give your card to Doctor Slammer, I was desired by that gentleman to identify the wearer of a very uncommon coat—a bright blue dress coat, with a gilt button displaying a bust, and the letters 'P. C.'"

Mr Winkle actually staggered with astonishment as he heard his own costume thus minutely described. Dr Slammer's friend proceeded:—"From the inquiries I made at the bar, just now, I was convinced that the owner of the coat in question arrived here, with three gentlemen, yesterday afternoon. I immediately sent up to the gentleman who was described as appearing the head of the party, and he at once referred me to you."

If the principal tower of Rochester Castle had suddenly walked from its foundation, and stationed itself opposite the coffee-room window, Mr Winkle's surprise would have been as nothing compared with the profound astonishment with which he had heard this address. His first impression was, that his coat had been stolen. "Will you allow me to detain you one moment?" said he.

"Certainly," replied the unwelcome visitor.

Mr Winkle ran hastily upstairs, and with a trembling hand opened the bag. There was the coat in its usual place, but exhibiting, on a close inspection, evident tokens of having been worn on the preceding night.

"It must be so," said Mr Winkle, letting the coat fall from his hands. "I took too much wine after dinner, and have a very vague recollection of walking about the streets and smoking a cigar afterwards. The fact is, I was very drunk;—I must have changed my coat—gone somewhere—and insulted somebody—I have no doubt of it; and this message is the terrible consequence." Saying which, Mr Winkle retraced his steps in the direction of the coffee-room, with the gloomy and dreadful resolve of accepting the challenge of the war-

like Doctor Slammer, and abiding by the worst consequences that might ensue.

To this determination Mr Winkle was urged by a variety of considerations; the first of which was, his reputation with the club. He had always been looked up to as a high authority on all matters of amusement and dexterity, whether offensive, defensive, or inoffensive; and if, on this very first occasion of being put to the test, he shrunk back from the trial, beneath his leader's eye, his name and standing were lost for ever. Besides, he remembered to have heard it frequently surmised by the uninitiated in such matters, that by an understood arrangement between the seconds, the pistols were seldom loaded with ball; and, furthermore, he reflected that if he applied to Mr Snodgrass to act as his second, and depicted the danger in glowing terms, that gentleman might possibly communicate the intelligence to Mr Pickwick, who would certainly lose no time in transmitting it to the local authorities, and thus prevent the killing or maiming of his follower.

Such were his thoughts when he returned to the coffee-room, and intimated his intention of accepting the Doctor's challenge.

"Will you refer me to a friend, to arrange the time and place of meeting?" said the officer.

"Quite unnecessary," replied Mr Winkle; "name them to me, and I can procure the attendance of a friend, afterwards."

"Shall we say—sunset this evening?" inquired the officer, in a careless tone.

"Very good," replied Mr Winkle; thinking in his heart it was very bad.

"You know Fort Pitt?"

"Yes; I saw it yesterday."

"If you will take the trouble to turn into the field which borders the trench, take the footpath to the left, when you arrive at an angle of the fortification; and

keep straight on 'till you see me; I will precede you to a secluded place, where the affair can be conducted without fear of interruption."

"*Fear* of interruption!" thought Mr Winkle.

. . . . . .

Mr Snodgrass was only too happy and eager to assist Mr Winkle as his second, and after "a case of satisfaction pistols with the satisfactory accompaniments of powder, ball and caps had been hired from a manufacturer in Rochester," the two "sallied forth on their awkward errand," which came to an unexpected conclusion, when Dr Slammer declared Mr Winkle was "not the man"! Whereat Mr Winkle—duly relieved—gained not a little reputation by his strong support of the honour of the Club as the reason for answering the challenge, although fully aware he was not responsible for the alleged insult: and he gained further laurels later when he returned to The Bull Hotel and told his story to Mr Pickwick, who was actually at that time entertaining Mr Jingle. One of the officers was not long in recognising the adventurer, and declaring that Dr Slammer could not think of proceeding with the affair. "He is a strolling actor.—He acts in the piece that the Officers of the 52nd get up at the Rochester Theatre to-morrow night." So with a recommendation to Mr Pickwick to be more select in the choice of his companions, the party of officers made their exit, much to the annoyance of Mr Pickwick.

He rushed forward with fury in his looks, and fire in his eye. His hand was upon the lock of the door;

in another instant it would have been on the throat of Doctor Payne of the 43rd, had not Mr Snodgrass seized his revered leader by the coat tail, and dragged him backwards.

"Restrain him," cried Mr Snodgrass, "Winkle, Tupman—he must not peril his distinguished life in such a cause as this."

"Let me go," said Mr Pickwick.

"Hold him tight," shouted Mr Snodgrass; and by the united efforts of the whole company, Mr Pickwick was forced into an arm chair. . . .

"They are not worth your notice," said the dismal man.

"You are right, sir," replied Mr Pickwick, "they are not. I am ashamed to have been betrayed into this warmth of feeling. Draw your chair up to the table, sir."

The dismal man readily complied: a circle was again formed round the table, and harmony once more prevailed.

VII

The next day witnessed the Review on Chatham Lines and not only gave us another adventure of Mr Pickwick, but introduced to us the inimitable Fat Boy, his master Mr Wardle, and Mr Wardle's family.

The whole population of Rochester and the adjoining towns rose from their beds at an early hour of the following morning, in a state of the utmost bustle and excitement. A grand review was to take place upon the Lines. The manœuvres of half-a-dozen regiments were to be inspected by the eagle eye of the commander-in-chief; temporary fortifications had been erected, the

citadel was to be attacked and taken, and a mine was to be sprung. . . .

The appearance of everything on the Lines denoted that the approaching ceremony was one of the utmost grandeur and importance. There were sentries posted to keep the ground for the troops, and servants on the batteries keeping places for the ladies, and sergeants running to and fro, with vellum-covered books under their arms, and Colonel Bulder, in full military uniform, on horseback, galloping first to one place and then to another, and backing his horse among the people, and prancing, and curvetting, and shouting in a most alarming manner, and making himself very hoarse in the voice, and very red in the face, without any assignable cause or reason whatever.

The long and interesting description of the Review, was a recollection of Dickens's early days at Chatham, where he lived from the age of about four until a little over ten. How Mr Pickwick got mixed up with the advancing troops, is capitally told, and the adventure fittingly concludes with the amusing chase of Mr Pickwick after his hat.

There are very few moments in a man's existence, when he experiences so much ludicrous distress, or meets with so little charitable commiseration, as when he is in pursuit of his own hat. A vast deal of coolness, and a peculiar degree of judgment, are requisite in catching a hat. A man must not be precipitate, or he runs over it: he must not rush into the opposite extreme, or he loses it altogether. The best way is, to keep gently up with the object of pursuit, to be wary and cautious, to watch your opportunity well, get gradually before it, then make a rapid dive, seize it

by the crown, and stick it firmly on your head: smiling pleasantly all the time, as if you thought it as good a joke as anybody else.

There was a fine gentle wind, and Mr Pickwick's hat rolled sportively before it. The wind puffed, and Mr Pickwick puffed, and the hat rolled over and over as merrily as a lively porpoise in a strong tide; and on it might have rolled, far beyond Mr Pickwick's reach, had not its course been providentially stopped, just as that gentleman was on the point of resigning it to its fate.

Mr Pickwick, we say, was completely exhausted, and about to give up the chase, when the hat was blown with some violence against the wheel of a carriage, which was drawn up in a line with half-a-dozen other vehicles, on the spot to which his steps had been directed. Mr Pickwick, perceiving his advantage, darted briskly forward, secured his property, planted it on his head, and paused to take breath. He had not been stationary half a minute, when he heard his own name eagerly pronounced by a voice, which he at once recognised as Mr Tupman's, and, looking upwards, he beheld a sight which filled him with surprise and pleasure.

In an open barouche, the horses of which had been taken out, the better to accommodate it to the crowded place, stood a stout old gentleman, in a blue coat and bright buttons, corduroy breeches and top boots, two young ladies in scarfs and feathers, a young gentleman apparently enamoured of one of the young ladies in scarfs and feathers, a lady of doubtful age, probably the aunt of the aforesaid, and Mr Tupman, as easy and unconcerned as if he had belonged to the family from the first moments of his infancy. Fastened up behind the barouche was a hamper of spacious dimensions—one of those hampers which always awakens in a contemplative mind, associations connected with cold

fowls, tongue, and bottles of wine—and on the box sat a fat and red-faced boy, in a state of somnolency, whom no speculative observer could have regarded for an instant without setting down as the official dispenser of the contents of the before-mentioned hamper, when the proper time for their consumption should arrive.

This incident served to introduce Mr Wardle and his family, who become important characters as the story progresses. Mr Wardle had already made the acquaintance of the Pickwickians, having " spent some ev'nins at your Club last winter."

With these new-found friends they witnessed the remainder of the review, had a very enjoyable picnic lunch, and an invitation for a stay at Mr Wardle's house.

" Now mind, we shall see you all to-morrow."

" Most certainly," replied Mr Pickwick.

" You have got the address ? "

" Manor Farm, Dingley Dell," said Mr Pickwick, consulting his pocket-book.

" That's it," said the old gentleman. " I don't let you off, mind, under a week; and undertake that you shall see everything worth seeing. If you've come down for a country life, come to me, and I'll give you plenty of it. . . ."

The horses were put in—the driver mounted—the fat boy clambered up by his side—farewells were exchanged—and the carriage rattled off. As the Pickwickians turned round to take a last glimpse of it, the setting sun cast a rich glow on the faces of their entertainers, and fell upon the form of the fat boy. His head was sunk upon his bosom; and he slumbered again.

VIII

The next morning saw the Pickwickians make their departure for Manor Farm, Dingley Dell, on their promised visit to Mr Wardle.

"Now, about Manor Farm," said Mr Pickwick. "How shall we go?"

"We had better consult the waiter, perhaps," said Mr Tupman, and the waiter was summoned accordingly.

"Dingley Dell, gentlemen—fifteen miles, gentlemen—cross road—post-chaise, sir?"

"Post-chaise won't hold more than two," said Mr Pickwick.

"True, sir—beg your pardon, sir.—Very nice four-wheeled chaise, sir—seat for two behind—one in front for the gentleman that drives—oh! beg your pardon, sir—that'll only hold three."

"What's to be done?" said Mr Snodgrass.

"Perhaps one of the gentlemen would like to ride, sir?" suggested the waiter, looking towards Mr Winkle; "very good saddle horses, sir—any of Mr Wardle's men coming to Rochester bring 'em back, sir."

"The very thing," said Mr Pickwick. "Winkle, will you go on horseback?"

Mr Winkle did entertain considerable misgivings in the very lowest recesses of his own heart, relative to his equestrian skill; but, as he would not have them even suspected on any account, he at once replied with great hardihood, "Certainly. I should enjoy it, of all things."

Mr Winkle had rushed upon his fate; there was no

resource. "Let them be at the door by eleven," said Mr Pickwick.

"Very well, sir," replied the waiter.

The waiter retired; the breakfast concluded; and the travellers ascended to their respective bedrooms, to prepare a change of clothing, to take with them on their approaching expedition.

Mr Pickwick had made his preliminary arrangements, and was looking over the coffee-room blinds at the passengers in the street, when the waiter entered, and announced that the chaise was ready—an announcement which the vehicle itself confirmed, by forthwith appearing before the coffee-room blinds aforesaid.

It was a curious little green box on four wheels, with a low place like a wine-bin for two behind, and an elevated perch for one in front, drawn by an immense brown horse, displaying great symmetry of bone. An hostler stood near, holding by the bridle another immense horse—apparently a near relative of the animal in the chaise—ready saddled for Mr Winkle.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr Pickwick, as they stood upon the pavement while the coats were being put in. "Bless my soul! who's to drive? I never thought of that."

"Oh! you, of course," said Mr Tupman.

"Of course," said Mr Snodgrass.

"I!" exclaimed Mr Pickwick.

"Not the slightest fear, sir," interposed the hostler. "Warrant him quiet, sir; a hinfant in arms might drive him."

"He don't shy, does he?" inquired Mr Pickwick.

"Shy, sir?—He wouldn't shy if he was to meet a vaggin-load of monkeys with their tails burnt off."

The last recommendation was indisputable. Mr Tupman and Mr Snodgrass got into the bin; Mr Pickwick ascended to his perch, and deposited his feet on

a floor-clothed shelf, erected beneath it for that purpose.

"Now, shiny Villiam," said the hostler to the deputy hostler, "give the gen'l'm'n the ribbins." "Shiny Villiam"—so called, probably, from his sleek hair and oily countenance—placed the reins in Mr Pickwick's left hand; and the upper hostler thrust a whip into his right.

"Wo—o!" cried Mr Pickwick, as the tall quadruped evinced a decided inclination to back into the coffee-room window.

"Wo—o!" echoed Mr Tupman and Mr Snodgrass, from the bin.

"Only his playfulness, gen'l'm'n," said the head hostler encouragingly; "jist kitch hold on him, Villiam." The deputy restrained the animal's impetuosity, and the principal ran to assist Mr Winkle in mounting.

"T'other side, sir, if you please."

"Blowed if the gen'l'm'n worn't a gettin' up on the wrong side," whispered a grinning post-boy, to the inexpressibly gratified waiter.

Mr Winkle, thus instructed, climbed into his saddle, with about as much difficulty as he would have experienced in getting up the side of a first-rate man-of-war.

"All right?" inquired Mr Pickwick, with an inward presentiment that it was all wrong.

"All right," replied Mr Winkle faintly.

"Let 'em go," cried the hostler,—"Hold him in, sir"; and away went the chaise and the saddle horse, with Mr Pickwick on the box of the one, and Mr Winkle on the back of the other, to the delight and gratification of the whole inn yard.

"What makes him go sideways?" said Mr Snodgrass in the bin, to Mr Winkle in the saddle.

"I can't imagine," replied Mr Winkle. His horse was going up the street in the most mysterious manner

—side first, with his head towards one side of the way, and his tail to the other.

Mr Pickwick had no leisure to observe either this, or any other particular, the whole of his faculties being concentrated in the management of the animal attached to the chaise, who displayed various peculiarities, highly interesting to a by-stander, but by no means equally amusing to anyone seated behind him. Besides constantly jerking his head up, in a very unpleasant and uncomfortable manner, and tugging at the reins to an extent which rendered it a matter of great difficulty for Mr Pickwick to hold them, he had a singular propensity for darting suddenly every now and then to the side of the road, then stopping short, and then rushing forward for some minutes, at a speed which it was wholly impossible to control.

"What *can* he mean by this?" said Mr Snodgrass, when the horse had executed this manœuvre for the twentieth time.

"I don't know," replied Mr Tupman; "it *looks* very like shying, don't it?" Mr Snodgrass was about to reply, when he was interrupted by a shout from Mr Pickwick.

"Wo—o," said that gentleman, "I have dropped my whip."

"Winkle," cried Mr Snodgrass, as the equestrian came trotting up on the tall horse, with his hat over his ears: and shaking all over, as if he would shake to pieces, with the violence of the exercise. "Pick up the whip, there's a good fellow." Mr Winkle pulled at the bridle of the tall horse till he was black in the face; and having at length succeeded in stopping him, dismounted, handed the whip of Mr Pickwick, and grasping the reins, prepared to remount.

Now whether the tall horse, in the natural playfulness of his disposition, was desirous of having a little innocent recreation with Mr Winkle, or whether it

occurred to him that he could perform the journey as much to his own satisfaction without a rider as with one, are points upon which, of course, we can arrive at no definite and distinct conclusion. By whatever motives the animal was actuated, certain it is that Mr Winkle had no sooner touched the reins, than he slipped them over his head, and darted backwards to their full length.

"Poor fellow," said Mr Winkle, soothingly,—"poor fellow—good old horse." The "poor fellow" was proof against flattery: the more Mr Winkle tried to get nearer him, the more he sidled away; and, notwithstanding all kinds of coaxing and wheedling, there were Mr Winkle and the horse going round and round each other for ten minutes, at the end of which time each was at precisely the same distance from the other as when they first commenced—an unsatisfactory sort of thing under any circumstances, but particularly so in a lonely road, where no assistance can be procured.

"What am I to do?" shouted Mr Winkle, after the dodging had been prolonged for a considerable time. "What am I to do? I can't get on him."

"You had better lead him till we come to a turnpike," replied Mr Pickwick from the chaise.

"But he won't come!" roared Mr Winkle. "Do come, and hold him."

Mr Pickwick was the very personation of kindness and humanity: he threw the reins on the horse's back, and having descended from his seat, carefully drew the chaise into the hedge, lest anything should come along the road, and stepped back to the assistance of his distressed companion, leaving Mr Tupman and Mr Snodgrass in the vehicle.

The horse no sooner beheld Mr Pickwick advancing towards him with the chaise whip in his hand, than he exchanged the rotatory motion in which he had previously indulged, for a retrograde movement of so very

determined a character, that it at once drew Mr Winkle, who was still at the end of the bridle, at a rather quicker rate than fast walking, in the direction from which they had just come. Mr Pickwick ran to his assistance, but the faster Mr Pickwick ran forward, the faster the horse ran backward. There was a great scraping of feet, and kicking up of the dust; and at last Mr Winkle, his arms being nearly pulled out of their sockets, fairly let go his hold. The horse paused, stared, shook his head, turned round, and quietly trotted home to Rochester, leaving Mr Winkle and Mr Pickwick gazing on each other with countenances of blank dismay. A rattling noise at a little distance attracted their attention. They looked up.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the agonized Mr Pickwick, "there's the other horse running away!"

It was but too true. The animal was startled by the noise, and the reins were on his back. The result may be guessed. He tore off with the four-wheeled chaise behind him, and Mr Tupman and Mr Snodgrass in the four-wheeled chaise. The heat was a short one. Mr Tupman threw himself into the hedge, Mr Snodgrass followed his example, the horse dashed the four-wheeled chaise against a wooden bridge, separated the wheels from the body, and the bin from the perch; and finally stood stock still to gaze upon the ruin he had made.

The first care of the two unspilt friends was to extricate their unfortunate companions from their bed of quickset—a process which gave them the unspeakable satisfaction of discovering that they had sustained no injury, beyond sundry rents in their garments, and various lacerations from the brambles. The next thing to be done was, to unharness the horse. This complicated process having been effected, the party walked slowly forward, leading the horse among them, and abandoning the chaise to its fate.

An hour's walking brought the travellers to a little

road-side public-house, with two elm trees, a horse trough, and a sign-post, in front; one or two deformed hay-ricks behind, a kitchen garden at the side, and rotten sheds and mouldering out-houses jumbled in strange confusion all about it. A red-headed man was working in the garden; and to him Mr Pickwick called lustily—"Hallo there!"

The red-headed man raised his body, shaded his eyes with his hand, and stared, long and coolly, at Mr Pickwick and his companions.

"Hallo there!" repeated Mr Pickwick.

"Hallo!" was the red-headed man's reply.

"How far is it to Dingley Dell?"

"Better er seven mile."

"Is it a good road?"

"No, t'ant." Having uttered this brief reply, and apparently satisfied himself with another scrutiny, the red-headed man resumed his work.

"We want to put this horse up here," said Mr Pickwick; "I suppose we can, can't we?"

"Want to put that ere horse up, do ee?" repeated the red-headed man, leaning on his spade.

"Of course," replied Mr Pickwick, who had by this time advanced, horse in hand, to the garden rails.

"Missus"—roared the man with the red head, emerging from the garden, and looking very hard at the horse—"Missus."

A tall bony woman—straight all the way down—in a coarse blue pelisse, with the waist an inch or two below her arm-pits, responded to the call.

"Can we put this horse up here, my good woman?" said Mr Tupman, advancing, and speaking in his most seductive tones. The woman looked very hard at the whole party; and the red-headed man whispered something in her ear.

"No," replied the woman, after a little consideration, "I'm afeerd on it."

"Afraid!" exclaimed Mr Pickwick, "what's the woman afraid of!"

"It got us in trouble last time," said the woman, turning into the house; "I woant have nothin' to say to 'un."

"Most extraordinary thing I ever met with in my life," said the astonished Mr Pickwick.

"I—I—really believe," whispered Mr Winkle, as his friends gathered round him, "that they think we have come by this horse in some dishonest manner."

"What!" exclaimed Mr Pickwick, in a storm of indignation. Mr Winkle modestly repeated his suggestion.

"Hallo, you fellow!" said the angry Mr Pickwick, "do you think we stole this horse?"

"I'm sure ye did," replied the red-headed man, with a grin which agitated his countenance from one auricular organ to the other. Saying which, he turned into the house, and banged the door after him.

"It's like a dream,"—ejaculated Mr Pickwick, "a hideous dream. The idea of a man's walking about, all day, with a dreadful horse that he can't get rid of!" The depressed Pickwickians turned moodily away, with the tall quadruped, for which they all felt the most unmitigated disgust, following slowly at their heels.

It was late in the afternoon, when the four friends and their four-footed companion, turned into the lane leading to Manor Farm: and even when they were so near their place of destination, the pleasure they would otherwise have experienced, was materially damped as they reflected on the singularity of their appearance, and the absurdity of their situation. Torn clothes, lacerated faces, dusty shoes, exhausted looks, and, above all, the horse. Oh, how Mr Pickwick cursed that horse.

Mr Pickwick was roused from "dire imaginings" concerning the fate of such a horse, by the appearance of Mr Wardle and the fat boy, at the "turn of the lane," and all together they went into the kitchen, where soap, water, needle and thread were soon to make them presentable.

Mr Snodgrass, having concluded his ablutions, took a survey of the room, while standing with his back to the fire, sipping his cherry brandy with heartfelt satisfaction. He describes it as a large apartment, with a red brick floor and a capacious chimney; the ceiling garnished with hams, sides of bacon, and ropes of onions. The walls were decorated with several hunting-whips, two or three bridles, a saddle and an old rusty blunderbuss, with an inscription below it, intimating that it was "Loaded"—as it had been, on the same authority, for half a century at least. An old eight-day clock, of solemn and sedate demeanour, ticked gravely in one corner; and a silver watch, of equal antiquity, dangled from one of the many hooks which ornamented the dresser.

"Ready?" said the old gentleman inquiringly, when his guests had been washed, mended, brushed, and brandied.

"Quite," replied Mr Pickwick.

"Come along, then," and the party having traversed several dark passages, and being joined by Mr Tupman, who had lingered behind to snatch a kiss from Emma, for which he had been duly rewarded with sundry pushings and scratchings, arrived at the parlour door.

"Welcome," said their hospitable host, throwing it open and stepping forward to announce them, "Welcome, gentlemen, to Manor Farm."

IX

At about the time these early chapters of *Pickwick* were being written, Dickens was spending his honeymoon at Chalk, near Gravesend. At that time the tenant of Cob Tree, Sandling, which is generally considered as the original of Manor Farm, was a Mr William Spong, said to be the prototype of Mr Wardle. He was buried at Aylesford Churchyard, where a tomb to his memory states that he was "late of Cob Tree, in the Parish of Boxley, who died November 15th, 1839." Dickens may possibly have met him and visited his house, driving over there from Chalk, which would account, not only for his giving a fictitious name to the house, but for the distance of fifteen miles and "cross road," and the statement made by his daughter Maimie in "My Father as I recall him," and repeated personally to Mr Percy Fitzgerald, that one day, when driving by "the beautiful back road" from Rochester to Cobham, "he showed me the exact spot where Mr Pickwick called out 'Whoa! I have dropped my whip.'"

This statement would seem to indicate that Dickens knew these by-roads very well during his early married days, whilst he may not have been so well acquainted with the main road through Rochester and over Blue Bell Hill to Maidstone, which, from the direction in which the chaise appeared in the High Street, in front of The Bull's coffee-room window, has led more than one to assume, was the way of their going. However,

we are told that "Mr Winkle's horse was drifting *up* the street in a most mysterious manner," so the "up" must signify towards London—*i.e.*, in the direction of Cobham—which would occasion the party in due course to come to Aylesford and its bridge, where the chaise came to grief; the only obstacle to this assumption being that the bridge is described as Wooden, whereas Aylesford Bridge is of Stone.

The name Manor Farm may possibly have been taken by Dickens from a farm of that name at Frindsbury, which also possesses a large pond, but generally it is agreed that "Cob Tree," a house at Sandling, in the Parish of Boxley, midway between Aylesford and Maidstone, was the original. Mr Hammond Hall, in his instructive book on "Mr Pickwick's Kent," points out how that the name "Dingley" is to be obtained from the endings of the names of the hamlet and parish, Sand(d)l(ing), Box(ley), in which Cob Tree is situated.

In no way does the prospect around Cob Tree belie the description of Manor Farm given in Chapter 6.

"Delightful situation this," said Mr Pickwick.

"There ain't a better spot o' ground in all Kent, sir," said the hard-headed man with the pippin face.

A further description of the surroundings of Manor Farm is supplied by Mr Pickwick on the morning after his arrival.

"Pleasant, pleasant country," sighed the enthusiastic gentleman, as he opened his lattice window. "Who could live to gaze from day to day on bricks and slates,

ON THE ROAD TO MANOR FARM

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who had once felt the influence of a scene like this? Who could continue to exist, where there are no cows but the cows on the chimney-pots; nothing redolent of Pan but pan-tiles; no crop but stone crop? Who could bear to drag out a life in such a spot? Who, I ask, could endure it?" and, having cross-examined solitude after the most approved precedents, at considerable length, Mr Pickwick thrust his head out of the lattice, and looked around him.

The rich, sweet smell of the hayricks rose to his chamber window; the hundred perfumes of the little flower-garden beneath scented the air around; the deep-green meadows shone in the morning dew that glistened on every leaf as it trembled in the gentle air: and the birds sang as if every sparkling drop were a fountain of inspiration to them.

Later in the history, as we shall see, Mr Pickwick and his three friends took the "Muggleton Telegraph" Coach from London, to pay a Christmas visit to Dingley Dell, for the marriage of Bella Wardle to Mr Trundle. And we are given a fine picture of the party, "well wrapped up in great coats, shawls and comforters," on the outside of the coach, and the progress of the drive in the cold, crisp weather.

The Kitchen where the Christmas festivities were held is still to be seen.

Such a Pond, too, exists in the grounds as that on which Mr Pickwick skated, and readers who will compare the accompanying illustration with "Phiz's" original drawing, will at once be struck with the resemblance.

X

On the morning after their arrival at Manor Farm, Mr Winkle so distinguished himself at rook-shooting that he lamed Mr Tupman in the arm, which prevented that Pickwickian from attending the famous cricket match in the afternoon. Mr Tupman was therefore left at home in charge of the females; and the remainder of the guests, under the guidance of Mr Wardle, proceeded to the spot where was to be held "that trial of skill, which had roused all Muggleton from its torpor, and innoculated Dingley Dell with a fever of excitement."

As their walk, which was not above two miles long, lay through shady lanes, and sequestered footpaths; and as their conversation turned upon the delightful scenery by which they were on every side surrounded, Mr Pickwick was almost inclined to regret the expedition they had used, when he found himself in the main street of the town of Muggleton.

Now, as to Muggleton, its identification is far more difficult than that of Eatanswill, with which we deal later. Some say it is Malling (once a noted place for cricket), others Gravesend, but personally we believe that Maidstone stood for the greater part of the picture.

When one considers the almost innumerable real places mentioned in *Pickwick*, it strikes one as particularly remarkable that three places should have been given fictitious names—Eatanswill, Muggleton and Dingley Dell. A profitable discussion might well arise, why did Dickens take this unusual course?

There is very little left of the old Muggleton that one can find in Maidstone to-day; yet it is a pleasant county town, with a spacious market square, large inns and many antiquities well worth inspecting.

The waiter at The Bull, Rochester, declared Dingley Dell to be distant "fifteen miles cross road." Muggleton was later described as "not above two miles" from Dingley Dell—hence, Muggleton must be either thirteen or seventeen miles from Rochester. Actually, Maidstone is seven miles from Rochester, but Dickens may never have approached it direct from Rochester until a much later date.

The only other claimant to the honour of Muggleton is West Malling, but Malling is not a corporate town, and its only claim to the distinction appears to be that it was a great place for cricket, and, therefore, most likely to have been in Dickens's mind when writing the accounts of the great match between the All Muggletonians and the Dingley Dellers.

Although Maidstone had some claim to cricket in Dickens's time, and was a corporate town, its other claim to be considered as Muggleton is that it possessed a jail, and a jail forms part of the story of "The Convict's Return," the story told at Dingley Dell.

Everybody whose genius has a topographical bent knows perfectly well that Muggleton is a corporate town, with a mayor, burgesses, and freemen; and anybody who has consulted the addresses of the mayor to the freemen, or the freemen to the mayor, or both to the corporation, or all three to Parliament, will learn from thence what they ought to have known before,

that Muggleton is an ancient and loyal borough, mingling a zealous advocacy of Christian principles with a devoted attachment to commercial rights; in demonstration whereof, the mayor, corporation, and other inhabitants, have presented at divers times, no fewer than one thousand four hundred and twenty petitions against the continuance of negro slavery abroad, and an equal number against any interference with the factory system at home; sixty-eight in favour of the sale of livings in the Church, and eighty-six for abolishing Sunday trading in the street.

Describing the town, Dickens says:

There was an open square for the market-place; and in the centre of it, a large inn with a sign-post in front, displaying an object very common in art, but rarely met with in nature—to wit, a blue lion, with three bow legs in the air, balancing himself on the extreme point of the centre claw of his fourth foot. There were, within sight, an auctioneer's and fire-agency office, a corn-factor's, a linen-draper's, a saddler's, a distiller's, a grocer's, and a shoe-shop—the last-mentioned warehouse being also appropriated to the diffusion of hats, bonnets, wearing apparel, cotton umbrellas, and useful knowledge. There was a red brick house with a small paved courtyard in front, which anybody might have known belonged to the attorney; and there was, moreover, another red brick house with Venetian blinds, and a large brass door-plate, with a very legible announcement that it belonged to the surgeon.

The account given of the cricket match, All Muggleton versus Dingley Dell, shows how cleverly Dickens could describe a game of which he had but little know-

THE CRICKET MATCH AT MUGGLETON
(By R. W. Buss.)

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ledge or practical experience. " All Muggleton had the first innings," and showed such skill that Dingley Dell, without apparently having any innings at all, " gave in, and allowed the superior prowess of All Muggleton." !

It may be that the thoughts of the good dinner to follow were responsible for this unique decision. However, the game served to re-introduce Alfred Jingle, " Of No Hall, Nowhere," who again entertained the friends with his stories. There was undoubtedly a mesmerism about him ; even Mr Winkle appears to have borne him no animosity, and the match ended with " a devilish good dinner—cold, but capital," at the Blue Lion Inn, Muggleton, where many toasts were drunk, and everybody made speeches. The party broke up at some minutes before twelve with the singing of " We won't go home till morning," and at something after one o'clock Mr Pickwick, Mr Wardle, Mr Winkle and Mr Snodgrass arrived with Mr Jingle at Manor Farm, and were carried off to bed, or escorted there according as their condition warranted, blaming it all on to the salmon. " Somehow or other it never is the wine in these cases."

XI

The introduction of Jingle into the pleasant household of the Wardles proved disastrous. Left at home on the day of the cricket match, Mr Tupman was not long in making love to Miss Rachael Wardle, the host's maiden sister. Seeing money in the case, Jingle re-

solved " to cut him out," and by an artfully contrived plan actually managed to elope with her to London, which affords Dickens the opportunity of giving a vivid description of the chase by Mr Pickwick and Mr Wardle after the couple. Assuming that Muggleton was Maidstone, the road followed would be by way of Wrotham, Farningham Swanley and Sidcup, entering London at Lewisham, and proceeding via New Cross along the Old Kent Road to the White Hart Inn in the Borough. The present Maidstone-London road is somewhat altered from the one that Mr Pickwick knew, particularly after leaving Wrotham Heath, where it misses the villages of Wrotham and Farningham; but the old and the new roads here and there intertwine, so the modern traveller has a good choice before him.

Old Wardle was greatly incensed at the duplicity of Jingle—" he's swindled me!—I won't bear it!—I'll have justice, Pickwick!—I won't stand it! . . . Put the horse in the gig! I'll get a chaise at the Lion, and follow 'em instantly." It was dangerous to let the old man go alone on such a journey, and Mr Pickwick at once volunteered to accompany him.

" You're a good fellow, Pickwick," said the host, grasping his hand. " Emma, give Mr Pickwick a shawl to tie round his neck—make haste. Look after your grandmother, girls; she has fainted away. Now then, are you ready? "

Mr Pickwick's mouth and chin having been hastily enveloped in a large shawl: his hat having been put on his head, and his great coat thrown over his arm, he replied in the affirmative.

They jumped into the gig. " Give her her head,

Tom," cried the host; and away they went, down the narrow lanes: jolting in and out of the cart-ruts, and bumping up against the hedges on either side, as if they would go to pieces every moment.

"How much are they a-head?" shouted Wardle, as they drove up to the door of the Blue Lion, round which a little crowd had collected, late as it was.

"Not above three-quarters of an hour," was everybody's reply.

"Chaise and four directly!—out with 'em! Put up the gig afterwards."

"Now, boys!" cried the landlord—"chaise and four out—make haste—look alive there!"

Away ran the hostlers, and the boys. The lanterns glimmered, as the men ran to and fro; the horses' hoofs clattered on the uneven paving of the yard; the chaise rumbled as it was drawn out of the coach-house; and all was noise and bustle.

"Now then!—is that chaise coming out to-night?" cried Wardle.

"Coming down the yard now, sir," replied the hostler.

Out came the chaise—in went the horses—on sprung the boys—in got the travellers.

"Mind—the seven-mile stage in less than half an hour!" shouted Wardle.

"Off with you!"

The boys applied whip and spur, the waiters shouted, the hostlers cheered, and away they went, fast and furiously.

"Pretty situation," thought Mr Pickwick, when he had had a moment's time for reflection. "Pretty situation for the General Chairman of the Pickwick Club. Damp chaise—strange horses—fifteen miles an hour—and twelve o'clock at night!"

For the first three or four miles, not a word was spoken by either of the gentlemen, each being too much

immersed in his own reflections to address any observations to his companion. When they had gone over that much ground, however, and the horses getting thoroughly warmed began to do their work in really good style, Mr Pickwick became too much exhilarated with the rapidity of the motion, to remain any longer perfectly mute.

"We're sure to catch them, I think," said he.

"Hope so," replied his companion.

"Fine night," said Mr Pickwick, looking up at the moon, which was shining brightly.

"So much the worse," returned Wardle; "for they'll have had all the advantage of the moonlight to get the start of us, and we shall lose it. It will have gone down in another hour."

"It will be rather unpleasant going at this rate in the dark, won't it?" inquired Mr Pickwick.

"I dare say it will," replied his friend drily.

Mr Pickwick's temporary excitement began to sober down a little, as he reflected upon the inconveniences and dangers of the expedition in which he had so thoughtlessly embarked. He was roused by a loud shouting of the post-boy on the leader.

"Yo—yo—yo—yo—yoe," went the first boy.

"Yo—yo—yo—yoe!" went the second.

"Yo—yo—yo—yoe!" chimed in old Wardle himself, most lustily, with his head and half his body out of the coach window.

"Yo—yo—yo—yoe!" shouted Mr Pickwick, taking up the burden of the cry, though he had not the slightest notion of its meaning or object. And amidst the yo—yoing of the whole four, the chaise stopped.

"What's the matter?" inquired Mr Pickick.

"There's a gate here," replied old Wardle. "We shall hear something of the fugitives."

After a lapse of five minutes, consumed in incessant

knocking and shouting, an old man in his shirt and trousers emerged from the turnpike-house, and opened the gate.

"How long is it since a post-chaise went through here?" inquired Mr Wardle.

"How long?"

"Ah!"

"Why, I don't rightly know. It worn't a long time ago, nor it worn't a short time ago—just between the two, perhaps."

"Has any chaise been by at all?"

"Oh yes, there's been a chay by."

"How long ago, my friend?" interposed Mr Pickwick, "an hour?"

"Ah, I daresay it might be," replied the man.

"Or two hours?" inquired the post-boy on the wheeler.

"Well, I shouldn't wonder if it was," returned the old man doubtfully.

"Drive on, boys," cried the testy old gentleman; "don't waste any more time with that old idiot!"

"Idiot!" exclaimed the old man with a grin, as he stood in the middle of the road with the gate half-closed, watching the chaise which rapidly diminished in the increasing distance. "No—not much o' that either; you've lost ten minutes here, and gone away as wise as you came, arter all. If every man on the line as has a guinea give him, earns it half as well, you won't catch t'other shay this side Mich'lmas, old short-and-fat." And with another prolonged grin, the old man closed the gate, re-entered his house, and bolted the door after him.

Meanwhile the chaise proceeded, without any slackening of pace, towards the conclusion of the stage. The moon, as Wardle had foretold, was rapidly on the wane; large tiers of dark heavy clouds, which had been gradually overspreading the sky for some time past,

now formed one black mass overhead; and large drops of rain which pattered every now and then against the windows of the chaise, seemed to warn the travellers of the rapid approach of a stormy night. The wind, too, which was directly against them, swept in furious gusts down the narrow road, and howled dismally through the trees which skirted the pathway. Mr Pickwick drew his coat closer about him, coiled himself more snugly up into the corner of the chaise, and fell into a sound sleep, from which he was only awakened by the stopping of the vehicle, the sound of the hostler's bell, and a loud cry of "Horses on directly!"

But here another delay occurred. The boys were sleeping with such mysterious soundness, that it took five minutes a-piece to wake them. The hostler had somehow or other mislaid the key of the stable, and even when that was found, two sleepy helpers put the wrong harness on the wrong horses, and the whole process of harnessing had to be gone through afresh. Had Mr Pickwick been alone, these multiplied obstacles would have completely put an end to the pursuit at once, but old Wardle was not to be so easily daunted; and he laid about him with such hearty good-will, cuffing this man, and pushing that; strapping a buckle here, and taking in a link there, that the chaise was ready in a much shorter time than could reasonably have been expected, under so many difficulties.

They resumed their journey; and certainly the prospect before them was by no means encouraging. The stage was fifteen miles long, the night was dark, the wind high, and the rain pouring in torrents. It was impossible to make any great way against such obstacles united: it was hard upon one o'clock already; and nearly two hours were consumed in getting to the end of the stage. Here, however, an object presented itself, which rekindled their hopes, and re-animated their drooping spirits.

"When did this chaise come in?" cried old Wardle, leaping out of his own vehicle, and pointing to one covered with wet mud, which was standing in the yard.

"Not a quarter of an hour ago, sir," replied the hostler to whom the question was addressed.

"Lady and gentleman?" inquired Wardle, almost breathless with impatience.

"Yes, sir."

"Tall gentleman — dress coat — long legs — thin body?"

"Yes, sir."

"Elderly lady—thin face—rather skinny—eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"By Heavens, it's them, Pickwick," exclaimed the old gentleman.

"Would have been here before," said the hostler, "but they broke a trace."

"'Tis them," said Wardle, "it is, by Jove! Chaise and four instantly. We shall catch them yet, before they reach the next stage. A guinea a-piece, boys—be alive there—bustle about—there's good fellows."

And with such admonitions as these, the old gentleman ran up and down the yard, and bustled to and fro, in a state of excitement which communicated itself to Mr Pickwick also; and under the influence of which, that gentleman got himself into complicated entanglements with harness, and mixed up with horses and wheels of chaises, in the most surprising manner, firmly believing that by so doing, he was materially forwarding the preparations for their resuming their journey.

"Jump in—jump in!" cried old Wardle, climbing into the chaise, pulling up the steps, and slamming the door after him. "Come along, make haste." And before Mr Pickwick knew precisely what he was about, he felt himself forced in at the other door, by one pull from the old gentleman, and one push from the hostler; and off they were again.

"Ah! we *are* moving now," said the old gentleman exultingly. They were indeed, as was sufficiently testified to Mr Pickwick, by his constant collisions either with the hard wood-work of the chaise, or the body of his companion.

"Hold up!" said the stout old Mr Wardle, as Mr Pickwick dived head foremost into his capacious waistcoat.

"I never did feel such a jolting in my life," said Mr Pickwick.

"Never mind," replied his companion, "it'll soon be over. Steady, steady."

Mr Pickwick planted himself into his own corner, as firmly as he could; and on whirled the chaise faster than ever.

They had travelled in this way about three miles, when Mr Wardle, who had been looking out of the window for two or three minutes, suddenly drew in his face, covered with splashes, and exclaimed in breathless eagerness—

"Here they are!"

Mr Pickwick thrust his head out of his window. Yes: there was a chaise and four, a short distance before them, dashing along at full gallop.

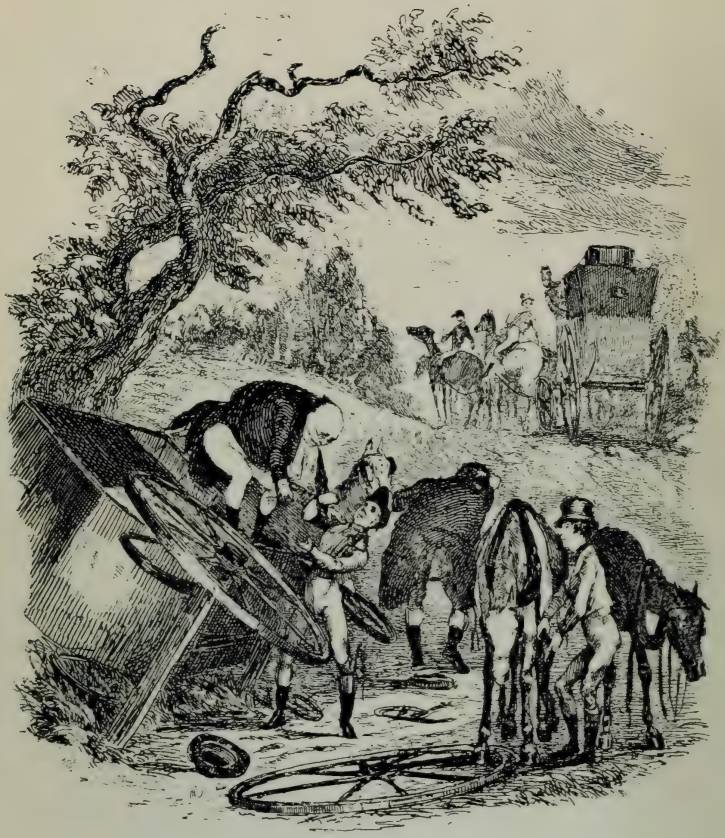
"Go on, go on," almost shrieked the old gentleman. "Two guineas a-piece, boys—don't let 'em gain on us—keep it up—keep it up."

The horses in the first chaise started on at their utmost speed; and those in Mr Wardle's galloped furiously behind them.

"I see his head," exclaimed the choleric old man, "Damme, I see his head."

"So do I," said Mr Pickwick, "that's he."

Mr Pickwick was not mistaken. The countenance of Mr Jingle, completely coated with the mud thrown up by the wheels, was plainly discernible at the window of his chaise; and the motion of his arm, which he was



THE BREAKDOWN ON THE ROAD TO LONDON

[To face p. 57.

waving violently towards the postillions, denoted that he was encouraging them to increased exertion.

The interest was intense. Fields, trees, and hedges, seemed to rush past them with the velocity of a whirlwind, so rapid was the pace at which they tore along. They were close by the side of the first chaise. Jingle's voice could be plainly heard, even above the din of the wheels, urging on the boys. Old Mr Wardle foamed with rage and excitement. He roared out scoundrels and villains by the dozen, clenched his fist and shook it expressively at the object of his indignation; but Mr Jingle only answered with a contemptuous smile, and replied to his menaces by a shout of triumph, as his horses, answering the increased application of whip and spur, broke into a faster gallop, and left the pursuers behind.

Mr Pickwick had just drawn in his head, and Mr Wardle, exhausted with shouting, had done the same, when a tremendous jolt threw them forward against the front of the vehicle. There was a sudden bump—a loud crash—away rolled a wheel, and over went the chaise.

After a very few seconds of bewilderment and confusion, in which nothing but the plunging of horses and breaking of glass could be made out, Mr Pickwick felt himself violently pulled out from among the ruins of the chaise; and as soon as he had gained his feet, and extricated his head from the skirts of his great coat, which materially impeded the usefulness of his spectacles, the full disaster of the case met his view.

Old Mr Wardle, without a hat, and his clothes torn in several places, stood by his side, and the fragments of the chaise lay scattered at their feet. The post-boys, who had succeeded in cutting the traces, were standing, disfigured with mud and disordered by hard riding, by the horses's heads. About a hundred yards in advance was the other chaise, which had pulled up on hearing

the crash. The postillions, each with a broad grin convulsing his countenance, were viewing the adverse party from their saddles, and Mr Jingle was contemplating the wreck from the coach-window, with evident satisfaction. The day was just breaking, and the whole scene was rendered perfectly visible by the grey light of the morning.

"Hallo!" shouted the shameless Jingle, "anybody damaged?—elderly gentlemen—no light weights—dangerous work—very."

"You're a rascal!" roared Wardle.

"Ha! ha!" replied Jingle; and then he added, with a knowing wink, and a jerk of the thumb towards the interior of the chaise—"I say—she's very well—desires her compliments—begs you won't trouble yourself—love to *Tuppy*—won't you get up behind?—drive on, boys."

The postillions resumed their proper attitudes, and away rattled the chaise, Mr Jingle fluttering in derision a white handkerchief from the coach-window.

Nothing in the whole adventure, not even the upset, had disturbed the calm and equable current of Mr Pickwick's temper. The villainy, however, which could first borrow money of his faithful follower, and then abbreviate his name to "Tuppy" was more than he could patiently bear. He drew his breath hard, and coloured up to the very tips of his spectacles, as he said, slowly and emphatically—

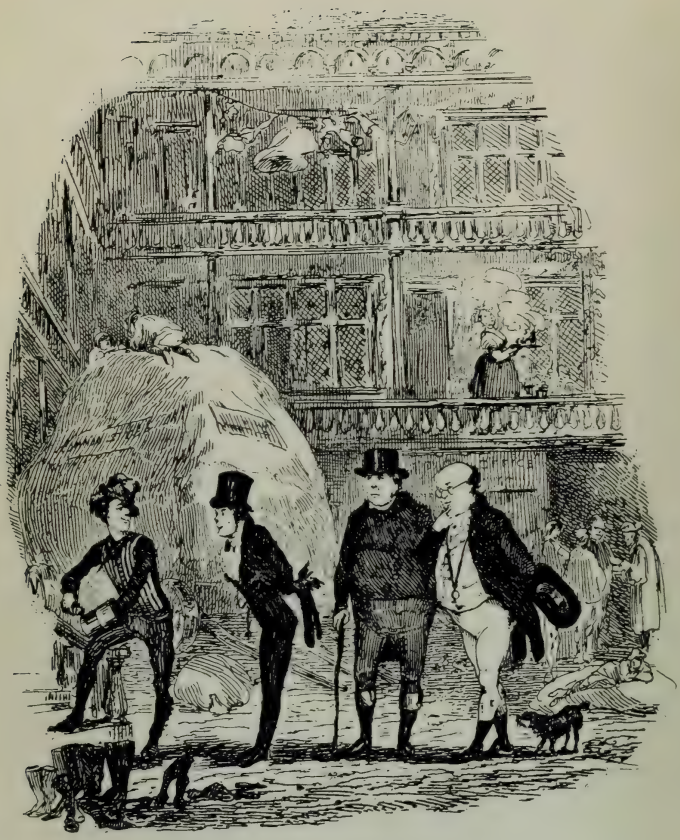
"If ever I meet that man again, I'll——"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Wardle, "that's all very well: but while we stand talking here, they'll get their licence, and be married in London."

Mr Pickwick paused, bottled up his vengeance, and corked it down.

"How far is it to the next stage?" inquired Mr Wardle, of one of the boys.

"Six mile, ain't it, Tom?"



THE ADVENT OF SAM WELLER,
AT THE WHITE HART INN, IN THE BOROUGH

[To face p. 59.

"Raythe better."

"Raythe better nor six mile, sir."

"Can't be helped," said Wardle, "we must walk it, Pickwick."

"No help for it," replied that truly great man.

So sending forward one of the boys on horseback, to procure a fresh chaise and horses, and leaving the other behind to take care of the broken one, Mr Pickwick and Mr Wardle set manfully forward on the walk, first tying their shawls round their necks, and slouching down their hats to escape as much as possible from the deluge of rain, which after a slight cessation had again begun to pour heavily down.

Although the account of the chase ends thus abruptly, we find in the next chapter that Mr Pickwick and Mr Wardle duly arrived at the White Hart Inn, in the Borough, with Mr Perker. What reason they had to suspect this to be the destination of the eloping couple, is not divulged: but it afforded the opportunity of presenting to the world one of the most famous characters in fiction—Sam Weller, who was responsible for the remarkable increase in the sale of the publication; and Sam was destined to accompany his master on all subsequent pilgrimages.

There are in London several old inns, once the headquarters of celebrated coaches in the days when coaches performed their journeys in a graver and more solemn manner than they do in these times; but which have now degenerated into little more than the abiding and booking places of country wagons. The reader would look in vain for any of these ancient hostelries, among the Golden Crosses and Bull and Mouths, which rear

their stately fronts in the improved streets of London. If he would light upon any of these old places, he must direct his steps to the obscurer quarters of the town; and there in some secluded nooks he will find several, still standing with a kind of gloomy sturdiness, amidst the modern innovations which surround them.

In the Borough especially, there still remain some half dozen old inns, which have preserved their external features unchanged, and which have escaped alike the rage for public improvement, and the encroachments of private speculation. Great, rambling, queer, old places they are, with galleries, and passages, and staircases, wide enough and antiquated enough, to furnish materials for a hundred ghost stories, supposing we should ever be reduced to the lamentable necessity of inventing any, and that the world should exist long enough to exhaust the innumerable veracious legends connected with old London Bridge, and its adjacent neighbourhood on the Surrey side.

It was in the yard of one of these inns—of no less celebrated a one than the White Hart—that a man was busily employed in brushing the dirt off a pair of boots, early on the morning succeeding the events narrated in the last chapter. He was habited in a coarse-striped waistcoat, with black calico sleeves, and blue glass buttons: drab breeches and leggings. A bright red handkerchief was wound in a very loose and unstudied style round his neck, and an old white hat was carelessly thrown on one side of his head. There were two rows of boots before him, one cleaned and the other dirty, and at every addition he made to the clean row, he paused from his work, and contemplated its results with evident satisfaction.

The yard presented none of that bustle and activity which are the usual characteristics of a large coach inn. Three or four lumbering waggons, each with a pile of goods beneath its ample canopy, about the height

THE ROAD TO COBHAM

'The three friends . . . set forward . . . to walk to Cobham. A delightful walk it was: for it was a pleasant afternoon in June, and their way lay through a deep and shady wood, cooled by the light wind which gently rustled the thick foliage, and enlivened by the songs of the birds that perched on the boughs.'

[To face p. 61.

of the second-floor window of an ordinary house, were stowed away beneath a lofty roof which extended over one end of the yard: and another, which was probably to commence its journey that morning, was drawn out into the open space. A double tier of bedroom galleries, with old clumsy balustrades, ran round two sides of the straggling area, and a double row of bells to correspond, sheltered from the weather by a little sloping roof, hung over the door leading to the bar and coffee-room. Two or three gigs and chaise-carts were wheeled up under different little sheds and pent-houses; and the occasional heavy tread of a cart-horse, or rattling of a chain at the further end of the yard, announced to anybody who cared about the matter, that the stable lay in that direction. When we add that a few boys in smock frocks were lying asleep on heavy packages, woolpacks, and other articles that were scattered about on heaps of straw, we have described as fully as need be the general appearance of the yard of the White Hart Inn, High Street, Borough, on the particular morning in question.

A loud ringing of one of the bells, was followed by the appearance of a smart chambermaid in the upper sleeping gallery, who, after tapping at one of the doors, and receiving a request from within, called over the balustrades—

"Sam!"

"Hallo," replied the man with the white hat.

"Number twenty-two wants his boots."

"Ask number twenty-two, wether he'll have 'em now, or wait till he gets 'em," was the reply.

"Come, don't be a fool, Sam," said the girl, coaxingly, "the gentleman wants his boots directly."

"Well, you *are* a nice young 'ooman for a musical party, you are," said the boot-cleaner. "Look at these here boots—eleven pair o' boots; and one shoe as b'longs to number six, with the wooden leg. The eleven

boots is to be called at half-past eight and the shoe at nine. Who's number twenty-two, that's to put all the others out? No, no; reg'lar rotation, as Jack Ketch said, wen he tied the men up. Sorry to keep you a waitin', sir, but I'll attend to you directly."

Such was the advent of Sam Weller in the yard of the White Hart Inn in the Borough. The old inn has been gone this half century or more: but close to where it once stood are the remains of the George Inn, and one can visualise the scene described above by a visit to it—the last of the galleried inns of London.

Thanks to Sam Weller, Mr Wardle got trace of his sister: he proffered the information that there was "a pair o' lady's shoes, in number five," and that the maker's name was "Brown of Muggleton." Jingle had already departed to Doctors Commons for the marriage licence, but on his return was bought off for one hundred and twenty pounds, and "slowly and sadly did the two friends and the deserted lady return next day in the Muggleton heavy coach."

XII

On their arrival at Manor Farm, it was discovered that Mr Tupman had sunk beneath a load of cares (naturally due to Rachael) and had gone away, leaving as his address, the Leather Bottle at Cobham. So our friends "procured a conveyance to Rochester" and after dinner there "set forward again in the afternoon to walk to Cobham:"

COBHAM HALL

'They emerged upon an open Park, with an ancient hall, displaying the quaint and picturesque architecture of Elizabeth's time.'

[To face p. 63.

A delightful walk it was: for it was a pleasant afternoon in June, and their way lay through a deep and shady wood, cooled by the light wind which gently rustled the thick foliage, and enlivened by the songs of the birds that perched on the boughs. The ivy and the moss crept in thick clusters over the old trees, and the soft green turf overspread the ground like a silken mat. They emerged upon an open Park, with an ancient hall, displaying the quaint and picturesque architecture of Elizabeth's time. Long vistas of stately oak and elm trees appeared on every side: large herds of deer were cropping the fresh grass; and occasionally a startled hare scoured along the ground, with the speed of the shadows thrown by the light clouds, which sweep across a sunny landscape like a passing breath of summer.

This walk through Cobham Park was a favourite one with Dickens, and it was the last he ever took. The Chalet, in which he wrote his last lines, is now in the grounds of Lord Darnley's mansion. Mr Pickwick was struck with the beauty of this old-world corner.

"And really," added Mr Pickwick, after half an hour's walking had brought them to the village, "really, for a misanthrope's choice, this is one of the prettiest and most desirable places of residence I ever met with."

Passing through the village, we reach the church at the far end, and, opposite it, the Dickensian hostelry which has a world-wide reputation, The Leather Bottle.

Having been directed to the Leather Bottle, a clean and commodious village ale-house, the three travellers entered and inquired for a gentleman of the name of

Tupman. "Show the gentlemen into the parlour, Tom," said the landlady. A stout country lad opened a door at the end of the passage, and the three friends entered a long, low-roofed room, furnished with a large number of high-backed leather cushioned chairs, of fantastic shapes, and embellished with a great variety of old portraits, and roughly-coloured prints of some antiquity. At the upper end of the room was a table, with a white cloth upon it, well covered with a roast fowl, bacon, ale and et ceteras; and at the table sat Mr Tupman, looking as unlike a man who had taken his leave of the world as possible.

"I did not expect to see you here," he said, as he grasped Mr Pickwick's hand. "It's very kind."

"Ah!" said Mr Pickwick, sitting down, and wiping from his forehead the perspiration which the walk had engendered. "Finish your dinner, and walk out with me. I wish to speak to you alone."

Mr Tupman did as he was desired; and Mr Pickwick, having refreshed himself with a copious draught of ale, waited his friend's leisure. The dinner was quickly despatched, and they walked out together.

For half an hour, their forms might have been seen pacing the churchyard to and fro, while Mr Pickwick was engaged in combating his companion's resolution. Any repetition of his arguments would be useless; for what language could convey to them that energy and force which their great originator's manner communicated? Whether Mr Tupman was already tired of retirement, or whether he was wholly unable to resist the eloquent appeal which was made to him, matters not, he did *not* resist it at last.

It was in the village of Cobham that Mr Pickwick made "that immortal discovery, which has been the

THE LEATHER BOTTLE, COBHAM

' "And really," added Mr Pickwick after half an hour's walking had brought them to the village, " really for a misanthrope's choice, this is one of the prettiest and most desirable places of residence I ever met with." . . .'

[To face p. 64.

pride and boast of his friends, and the envy of every antiquarian in this or any other country."

They had passed the door of their inn, and walked a little way down the village, before they recollected the precise spot in which it stood. As they turned back, Mr Pickwick's eye fell upon a small broken stone, partially buried in the ground, in front of a cottage door. He paused.

"This is very strange," said Mr Pickwick.

"What is strange?" inquired Mr Tupman, staring eagerly at every object near him, but the right one. "God bless me, what's the matter?"

This last was an ejaculation of irrepressible astonishment, occasioned by seeing Mr Pickwick, in his enthusiasm for discovery, fall upon his knees before the little stone, and commence wiping the dust off it with his pocket-handkerchief.

"There is an inscription here," said Mr Pickwick.

"Is it possible?" said Mr Tupman.

"I can discern," continued Mr Pickwick, rubbing away with all his might, and gazing through his spectacles:

"I can discern a cross and a B, and then a T. This is important," continued Mr Pickwick, starting up. "This is some very old inscription, existing perhaps long before the ancient alms-houses in this place. It must not be lost."

He tapped at the cottage door. A labouring man opened it.

"Do you know how this stone came here, my friend?" inquired the benevolent Mr Pickwick.

"No, I doan't, sir," replied the man civilly. "It was here long afore I war born, or any on us."

Mr Pickwick glanced triumphantly at his companion.

"You—you—are not particularly attached to it, I

daresay," said Mr Pickwick, trembling with anxiety. "You wouldn't mind selling it, now?"

"Ah! but who'd buy it?" inquired the man, with an expression of face which he probably meant to be very cunning.

"I'll give you ten shillings for it, at once," said Mr Pickwick, "if you would take it up for me."

The astonishment of the village may be easily imagined, when (the little stone having been raised with one wrench of a spade) Mr Pickwick, by dint of great personal exertion, bore it with his own hands to the inn, and, after having carefully washed it, deposited it on the table.

The exultation and joy of the Pickwickians knew no bounds, when their patience and assiduity, their washing and scraping, were crowned with success. The stone was uneven and broken, and the letters were straggling and irregular, but the following fragment of an inscription was clearly to be deciphered:

+
BILST
UM
PSHI
S. M.
ARK

Mr Pickwick's eyes sparkled with delight, as he sat and gloated over the treasure he had discovered. He had attained one of the greatest objects of his ambition. In a county known to abound in remains of the early ages; in a village in which there still existed some memorials of the olden time, he—he, the Chairman of the Pickwick Club—had discovered a strange and curious inscription of unquestionable antiquity, which had wholly escaped the observation of the many learned

THE COFFEE-ROOM AT THE LEATHER BOTTLE, COBHAM

'The three friends entered a long, low-roofed room, furnished with a large number of high-backed leather-cushioned chairs, of fantastic shapes, and embellished with a great variety of old portraits, and roughly-coloured prints of some antiquity.'

[To face p. 66

men who had preceded him. He could hardly trust the evidence of his senses.

"This—this," said he, "determines me. We return to town, to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" exclaimed his admiring followers.

"To-morrow," said Mr Pickwick. "This treasure must be at once deposited where it can be thoroughly investigated, and properly understood. I have another reason for this step. In a few days, an election is to take place for the borough of Eatanswill, at which Mr Perker, a gentleman whom I lately met, is the agent of one of the candidates. We will behold, and minutely examine, a scene so interesting to every Englishman."

"We will," was the animated cry of three voices.

Mr Pickwick looked round him. The attachment and fervour of his followers, lighted up a glow of enthusiasm within him. He was their leader, and he felt it.

"Let us celebrate this happy meeting, with a convivial glass," said he. This proposition, like the other, was received with unanimous applause. And having himself deposited the important stone in a small deal box, purchased from the landlady for the purpose, he placed himself in an arm-chair at the head of the table; and the evening was devoted to festivity and conversation.

It was past eleven o'clock—a late hour for the little village of Cobham—when Mr Pickwick retired to the bedroom which had been prepared for his reception. He threw open the lattice-window, and setting his light upon the table, fell into a train of meditation on the hurried events of the two precedings days.

. . . . . .

The next morning " after a hearty breakfast, the four gentlemen sallied forth to walk to Gravesend, followed by a man bearing the stone in its deal box. They reached that town about one o'clock (their luggage they

had directed to be forwarded to the City, from Rochester), and being fortunate enough to secure places on the outside of a coach, arrived in London in sound health and spirits on that same afternoon."

Thus did the Kentish Pilgrimage of the Pickwickians come to an end, and Sam Weller made his bow to a vast appreciative audience. It was the contemplated engagement of that worthy as his valet, that caused Mr Pickwick to put that immortal question to his landlady, Mrs Bardell: "Do you think it a much greater expense to keep two people than to keep one?" which resulted in the equally immortal Breach of Promise Action of Bardell against Pickwick.

"'Take the bill down,' said Sam epigramatically, 'I'm let to a single gentleman, and the terms is agreed upon' . . . and before night had closed in, Mr Weller was furnished with a grey coat with the P.C. button, a black hat with a cockade in it, a pink striped waistcoat, light breeches and gaiters, and a variety of other necessaries, too numerous to recapitulate."

COBHAM CHURCH

'For half an hour, their forms might have been seen pacing the churchyard to and fro, while Mr Pickwick was engaged in combating his companion's resolution.'

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THE SECOND PILGRIMAGE

THE SECOND PILGRIMAGE

To Eatanswill and Bury St. Edmunds

I

THE second journey of Mr Pickwick was decided on by that impetuous gentleman before he had left Cobham, or actually engaged Sam Weller to accompany him on his travels. He thus broached it to his friends when urging them to take to London on the morrow the " monument of great antiquity " he had discovered.

" In a few days an election is to take place at Eatanswill at which Mr Perker, a gentleman whom I lately met, is an agent of one of the candidates. We will behold, and minutely examine, a scene so interesting to every Englishman."

So, on the morning after the engagement of Sam Weller we are introduced to that original " on the outside of the Eatanswill coach," regarding his new " rig out " and apostrophising himself in the following manner :

" I wonder whether I'm meant to be a footman, or a groom, or a gamekeeper, or a seedsman. I looks like

a sort of compo of every one on 'em. Never mind there's change of air, plenty to see, and little to do: and all this suits my complaint uncommon. So long life to the Pickwicks, says I."

Eatanswill—like Muggleton—is one of the few towns in *The Pickwick Papers* that Dickens disguised. The name is in itself sufficiently suggestive. Some say he derived it from the town of Eaton Socon—which in *Nicholas Nickleby* he humorously calls Eton Slocomb.

This is how it is introduced in Chapter thirteen:

We will frankly acknowledge that, up to the period of our being first immersed in the voluminous papers of the Pickwick Club, we had never heard of Eatanswill; we will with equal candour admit, that we have in vain searched for proof of the actual existence of such a place at the present day. Knowing the deep reliance to be placed on every note and statement of Mr Pickwick's, and not presuming to set up our recollection against the recorded declarations of that great man, we have consulted every authority, bearing upon the subject, to which we could possibly refer. We have traced every name in schedules A and B, without meeting with that of Eatanswill; we have minutely examined every corner of the Pocket County Maps issued for the benefit of society by our distinguished publishers, and the same result has attended our investigation. We are therefore led to believe, that Mr Pickwick, with that anxious desire to abstain from giving offence to any, and with those delicate feelings for which all who knew him well know he was so eminently remarkable, purposely substituted a fictitious designation, for the real name of the place in which his observations were made. We are confirmed in this belief by a little circumstance,

apparently slight and trivial in itself, but when considered in this point of view, not undeserving of notice. In Mr Pickwick's note-book, we can just trace an entry of the fact, that the places of himself and followers were booked by the Norwich coach; but this entry was afterwards lined through, as if for the purpose of concealing even the direction in which the borough is situated. We will not, therefore, hazard a guess upon the subject, but will at once proceed with this history; content with the materials which its characters have provided for us.

Now, what town is most likely to have sat for the principal place in the composite picture of this seat of political bribery and corruption? In 1834 Dickens wrote *A Passage in the Life of Mr Watkins Tottle*, which appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* for January and February 1835, and in this we read:

"When I was in Suffolk . . . which is now some years ago, business led me to the town of Bury St. Edmunds. I had to stop at the principal places in my way, and therefore, for the sake of convenience, I travelled in a gig. I left Sudbury one dark night. . . ."

In the July of that year (1834) Dickens, then twenty-two years of age, was in Sudbury, reporting the Parliamentary by-election.

Although the county of Kent held the earliest affections of Dickens through his boyhood days at Rochester and Chatham, Essex and Suffolk have a special claim, as some of his earliest experiences of English travelling were gained from his visits to East Anglia during the Elections of 1834. The first of all the letters published

in *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, is to Henry Austin, a friend of his boyhood, who afterwards married Dickens's sister, Letitia. It is undated, but was doubtless written in 1834, during which time he was a reporter for the *Morning Chronicle;* the trip he was " ordered," was on behalf of that paper.

Furnival's Inn,

Wednesday night, past 12.

Dear Henry,

I have just been ordered on a journey, the length of which is at present uncertain. I may be back on Sunday very probably, and start again on the following day. Should this be the case, you shall hear from me before.

Don't laugh. I am going (alone) in a gig: and, to quote the eloquent inducements which the proprietors of Hampstead *shays* hold out to Sunday riders—" the gen'l'm'n drives himself." I am going into Essex and Suffolk. It strikes me I shall be spilt before I pay a turnpike. I have a presentiment I shall run over an only child before I reach Chelmsford, my first stage.

Let the evident haste of this specimen of " The Polite Letter Writer " be its excuse, and

Believe me, dear Henry,

Most sincerely yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

Thus it came about that when the second pilgrimage of The Pickwickians became necessary Dickens chose to take them into that part of the country which, after Kent, he knew the best, viz., Essex and Suffolk. Whatever may be the true identity of the town of Eatanswill,

Mr Pickwick certainly travelled by the Norwich coach.

From Eatanswill Mr Pickwick went to Bury St. Edmunds (there is no concealment of the name here), and this in our opinion is the best reason that can be advanced for declaring Sudbury to be the original of that famous town, whose origin has for long been a matter of discussion in the Dickens world. Dickens knew Sudbury only in relation to the Norwich Road running through Bury St. Edmunds—not in relation with Ipswich, which has still some ardent supporters who declare it to be the one and only Eatanswill.

According to Cary's Itinerary, the Norwich coaches which started from The Bull in Whitechapel went via Sudbury, and that is another reason for supposing Sudbury, rather than Ipswich, to have stood for Eatanswill.

Dickens undoubtedly intended Eatanswill to represent a type of the " rotten borough " of which he had had so much experience just prior to writing the story; hence he found it necessary to give a fictitious name to the place; such necessity not arising in the case of Bury St. Edmunds or Ipswich, he made no concealment of their identity.

II

It was late in the evening, when Mr Pickwick and his companions, assisted by Sam, dismounted from the roof of the Eatanswill coach. Large blue silk flags were flying from the windows of the Town Arms Inn, and bills were posted in every sash, intimating, in gigantic letters, that the honourable Samuel Slumkey's Com-

mittee sat there daily. A crowd of idlers were assembled in the road, looking at a hoarse man in the balcony, who was apparently talking himself very red in the face in Mr Slumkey's behalf; but the force and point of whose arguments were somewhat impaired by the perpetual beating of four large drums which Mr Fizkin's committee had stationed at the street corner. . . .

The Pickwickians had no sooner dismounted, than they were surrounded by a branch mob of the honest and independent, who forthwith set up three deafening cheers, which being responded to by the main body (for it's not at all necessary for a crowd to know what they are cheering about) swelled into a tremendous roar of triumph, which stopped even the red-faced man in the balcony.

"Hurrah!" shouted the mob in conclusion.

"One cheer more," screamed the little fugleman in the balcony, and out shouted the mob again, as if lungs were cast iron, with steel works.

"Slumkey for ever!" roared the honest and independent.

"Slumkey for ever!" echoed Mr Pickwick, taking off his hat.

"No Fizkin!" roared the crowd.

"Certainly not!" shouted Mr Pickwick.

"Hurrah!" And then there was another roaring, like that of a whole menagerie when the elephant has rung the bell for the cold meat.

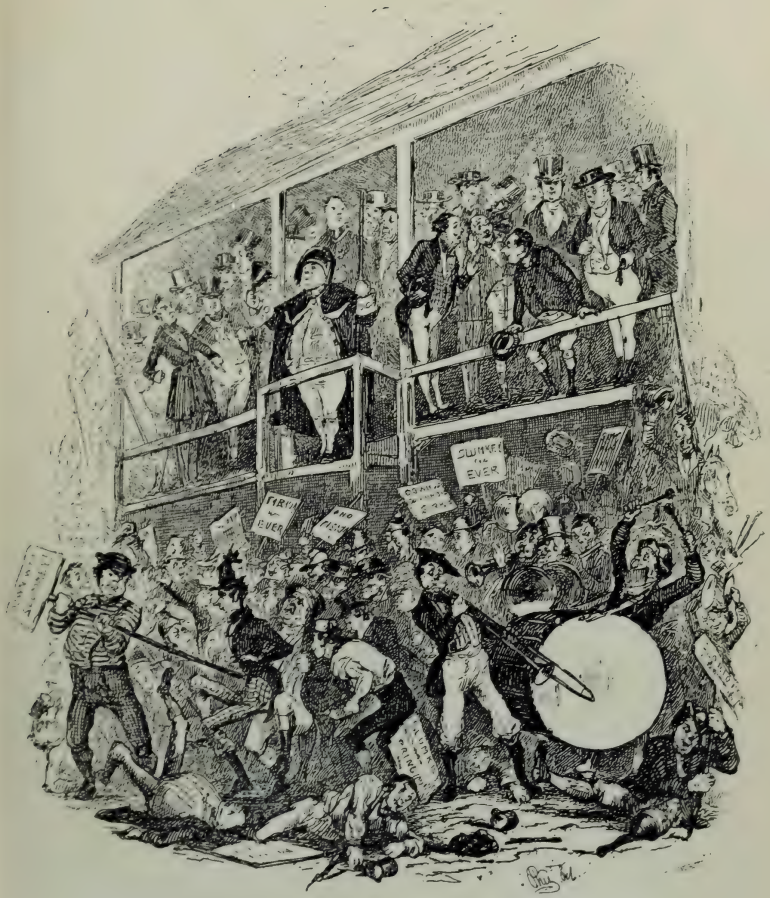
"Who is Slumkey?" whispered Mr Tupman.

"I don't know," replied Mr Pickwick in the same tone. "Hush. Don't ask any questions. It's always best on these occasions to do what the mob do."

"But suppose there are two mobs?" suggested Mr Snodgrass.

"Shout with the largest," replied Mr Pickwick.

Volumes could not have said more.



THE ELECTION AT EATANSWILL

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Beyond the picture of the election activities, we are told very little of the town of Eatanswill itself. Where were Fizkin Lodge and Slumkey Hall, the residences of the rival candidates? Where the offices of the equally rival newspapers, the *Eatanswill Gazette* and the *Eatanswill Independent*, and the house of Mr Pott, with "the little back office where he prepared his thunderbolts," where Mr Winkle worked havoc? We can find no clue to their whereabouts. Even in the High Street we fail to locate the house of Soloman Lucas, the Jew, who had "thousands of fancy dresses" —from whose stock the party selected their costumes to wear at Mrs Leo Hunter's "Fête Champêtre."

The Town Arms Inn, the headquarters of the Blue party, is said to have had as its original the Rose and Crown, which was unfortunately completely destroyed by fire in 1922.

There was not a single bed to be had at the Town Arms, so Mr Pickwick and Mr Wardle were accommodated at the house of Mr Pott, the editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette*, whilst Mr Tupman and Mr Snodgrass secured the only two remaining rooms at the Peacock, said to be the Swan Inn.

Some of the election doings at the Peacock and Town Arms are thus racily narrated by Sam Weller:

"Reg'lar game, sir," replied Mr Weller; "our people's a col-lecting down at the Town Arms, and they're a hollering themselves hoarse already."

"Ah," said Mr Pickwick, "do they seem devoted to their party, Sam?"

"Never see such dewotion in my life, sir."

"Energetic, eh?" said Mr Pickwick.

"Uncommon," replied Sam; "I never see men eat and drink so much afore. I wonder they a'nt afeer'd o' bustin."

"That's the mistaken kindness of the gentry here," said Mr Pickwick.

"Wery likely," replied Sam, briefly.

"Fine, fresh, hearty fellows they seem," said Mr Pickwick, glancing from the window.

"Wery fresh," replied Sam; "me, and the two waiters at the Peacock, has been a pumpin' over the independent woters as supped there last night."

"Pumping over independent voters!" exclaimed Mr Pickwick.

"Yes," said his attendant, "every man slept vere he fell down; we dragged 'em out, one by one, this mornin', and put 'em under the pump, and they're in reg'lar fine order, now. Shillin' a head the committee paid for that 'ere job."

"Can such things be!" exclaimed the astonished Mr Pickwick.

"Lord bless your heart, sir," said Sam, "why where was you half baptized?—that's nothin', that a'nt."

"Nothing?" said Mr Pickwick.

"Nothin' at all, sir," replied his attendant. "The night afore the last day o' the last election here, the opposite party bribed the bar-maid at the Town Arms, to hocus the brandy and water of fourteen unpolled electors as was a stoppin' in the house."

"What do you mean by 'hocussing' brandy and water?" inquired Mr Pickwick.

"Puttin' laud'num in it," replied Sam. "Blessed if she didn't send 'em all to sleep till twelve hours arter the election was over. They took one man up to the booth, in a truck, fast asleep, by way of experiment,

but it was no go—they wouldn't poll him; so they brought him back, and put him to bed again."

. . . . . .

The speeches of the two candidates, though differing in every other respect, afforded a beautiful tribute to the merit and high worth of the electors of Eatanswill. Both expressed their opinion that a more independent, a more enlightened, a more public-spirited, a more noble-minded, a more disinterested set of men than those who had promised to vote for him, never existed on earth; each darkly hinted his suspicions that the electors in the opposite interest had certain swinish and besotted infirmities which rendered them unfit for the exercise of the important duties they were called upon to discharge. Fizkin expressed his readiness to do anything he was wanted; Slumkey, his determination to do nothing that was asked of him. Both said that the trade, the manufactures, the commerce, the prosperity, of Eatanswill, would ever be dearer to their hearts than any earthly object; and each had it in his power to state, with the utmost confidence, that he was the man who would eventually be returned.

There was a show of hands; the Mayor decided in favour of the honourable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall. Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, demanded a poll, and a poll was fixed accordingly. . . .

During the whole time of the polling, the town was in a perpetual fever of excitement. Everything was conducted on the most liberal and delightful scale. Exciseable articles were remarkably cheap at all the public houses; and spring vans paraded the streets for the accommodation of voters who were seized with any temporary dizziness in the head—an epidemic which prevailed among the electors, during the contest, to a most alarming extent, and under the influence of which

they might frequently be seen lying on the pavements in a state of utter insensibility. A small body of electors remained unpolled on the very last day. They were calculating and reflecting persons, who had not yet been convinced by the arguments of either party, although they had had frequent conferences with each. One hour before the close of the poll, Mr Perker solicited the honour of a private interview with these intelligent, these noble, these patriotic men. It was granted. His arguments were brief, but satisfactory. They went in a body to the poll; and when they returned, the honourable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, was returned also.

III

On the third morning after the election, Mr Pickwick received a visit from the husband of Mrs Leo Hunter, of The Den, with an invitation to attend on the morrow, "A public breakfast—a fête champêtre—to a great number of those who have rendered themselves celebrated by their works and talents. . . . Feats of reason, flows of soul."

The guests were expected to come in fancy dress, but Mr Pickwick was excused this, a gentleman of his celebrity, so he was assured, giving greater pleasure to the guests, in his own costume, rather than in an assumed one.

Mr Tupman appeared as a Bandit, in spite of Mr Pickwick's objection that he was "too old and too fat," which brought forth the retort that Mr Pickwick was "a fellow," to which Mr Pickwick heatedly replied, "You're another!" But fortunately the disagreement

was as short as it was trivial, and the three companions repaired to Mr Solomon Lucas for the costumes, Mr Snodgrass as a Troubadour, Mr Tupman as a Bandit, and Mr Winkle in a red coat " could not possibly have been mistaken for anything but a Sportsman, if he had not borne an equal resemblance to a general postman."

Mr Pickwick was greeted with loud applause, the public " probably under the impression that his tights and gaiters were some remnants of the dark ages."

The delights of Mrs Leo Hunter's fancy dress breakfast party were brought to a sudden termination by the entrance of Mr Charles Fitz-Marshall, in the costume of a naval officer, who quickly decamped " when his eyes encountered the indignant orbs of Mr Pickwick "—for he was Alfred Jingle.

Hastily enquiring the residence of Mr Charles Fitz-Marshall, and being told he was " at present at the Angel at Bury," Mr Pickwick decided to follow him. " How do we know whom he is deceiving there. He deceived a worthy man once, and we were the innocent cause. He shall not do it again, if I can help it. I'll expose him."

Instructing Sam Weller to follow him, and bidding Tupman to join him at Bury when he wrote, Mr Pickwick departed and in a very short space of time—

Mr Pickwick and Sam Weller, perched on the outside of a stage coach, were every succeeding minute placing a less and less distance between themselves and the good old town of Bury St. Edmunds.

The journey of sixteen and a half miles between Sudbury and Bury St. Edmunds is thus pleasingly described. It will be noticed that the time of the year suddenly jumps at least a month in this description!

There is no month in the whole year, in which nature wears a more beautiful appearance than in the month of August. Spring has many beauties, and May is a fresh and blooming month, but the charms of this time of year, are enhanced by their contrast with the winter season. August has no such advantage. It comes when we remember nothing but clear skies, green fields, and sweet-smelling flowers—when the recollection of snow, and ice, and bleak winds, has faded from our minds as completely as they have disappeared from the earth,—and yet what a pleasant time it is. Orchards and corn-fields ring with the hum of labour; trees bend beneath the thick clusters of rich fruit which bow their branches to the ground; and the corn, piled in graceful sheaves, or waving in every light breath that sweeps above it, as if it wooed the sickle, tinges the landscape with a golden hue. A mellow softness appears to hang over the whole earth; the influence of the season seems to extend itself to the very wagon, whose slow motion across the well-reaped field, is perceptible only to the eye, but strikes with no harsh sound upon the ear.

As the coach rolls swiftly past the fields and orchards which skirt the road, groups of women and children, piling the fruit in sieves, or gathering the scattered ears of corn, pause for an instant from their labour, and shading the sun-burnt face with a still browner hand, gaze upon the passengers with curious eyes, while some stout urchin, too small to work, but too mischievous to be left at home, scrambles over the side of the basket in which he has been deposited for security, and kicks

and screams with delight. The reaper stops in his work, and stands with folded arms, looking at the vehicle as it whirls past; and the rough cart-horses bestow a sleepy glance upon the smart coach team, which says, as plainly as a horse's glance can, "It's all very fine to look at, but slow going, over a heavy field, is better than warm work like that, upon a dusty road, after all." You cast a look behind you, as you turn a corner of the road. The women and children have resumed their labour, the reaper once more stoops to his work, the cart-horses have moved on, and all are again in motion.

The leisurely coach would take about two hours to accomplish the journey, which was beguiled by some of the choicest witticisms of Sam Weller. Surveying the scene above described, Mr Pickwick remarked—

"Delightful prospect, Sam," said Mr Pickwick.

"Beats the chimley pots, sir," replied Mr Weller, touching his hat.

"I suppose you have hardly seen anything but chimney-pots and bricks and mortar all your life, Sam," said Mr Pickwick, smiling.

"I worn't always a boots, sir," said Mr Weller, with a shake of the head. "I wos a vagginer's boy, once."

"When was that?" inquired Mr Pickwick.

"When I wos first pitched neck and crop into the world, to play at leap-frog with its troubles," replied Sam. "I wos a carrier's boy at startin': then a vagginer's, then a helper, then a boots. Now I'm a gen'l'm'n's servant. I shall be a gen'l'm'n myself one of these days, perhaps, with a pipe in my mouth, and a summer-house in the back garden. Who knows? *I* shouldn't be surprised, for one."

"You are quite a philosopher, Sam," said Mr Pickwick.

"It runs in the family, I b'lieve, sir," replied Mr Weller.

Then followed the amusing description of "the twopenny rope" to further beguile the journey, until—

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Sam, suddenly breaking off in his loquacious discourse. "Is this Bury St. Edmunds?"

"It is," replied Mr Pickwick.

The coach rattled through the well-paved streets of a handsome little town, of thriving and cleanly appearance, and stopped before a large inn situated in a wide open street, nearly facing the old abbey.

"And this," said Mr Pickwick, looking up, "is the Angel! We alight here."

IV

The visitor to Bury St. Edmunds will not wonder why the town had a place of affection in the heart of Dickens. "The bright little town of Bury St. Edmunds" he calls it—casually enough, perhaps, but the right note is there—in one of his *Uncommercial Traveller* papers.

The Angel Hotel still stands opposite the Abbey Gateway, and at once calls to mind the adventures of Mr Pickwick in search of Jingle. On their arrival, Mr Pickwick, enjoining secrecy, engaged a private room and retired for the night. Sam turned scout, but

THE ANGEL AT BURY ST. EDMUNDS

'The coach rattled through the well-paved streets of a handsome little town, of thriving and cleanly appearance, and stopped before a large inn situated in a wide open street, nearly facing the old abbey.

"And this," said Mr Pickwick, looking up, "is the Angel! We alight here."'

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could get no news concerning Jingle: and after occupying the chair in the tap-room, he too retired to rest.

Early on the ensuing morning, Mr Weller was dispelling all the feverish remains of the previous evening's conviviality, through the instrumentality of a half-penny shower-bath (having induced a young gentleman attached to the stable-department, by the offer of that coin, to pump over his head and face, until he was perfectly restored), when he was attracted by the appearance of a young fellow in mulberry-coloured livery, who was sitting on a bench in the yard, reading what appeared to be a hymn-book, with an air of deep abstraction, but who occasionally stole a glance at the individual under the pump, as if he took some interest in his proceedings, nevertheless. . . .

At last, Sam, by way of giving him an opportunity, said with a familiar nod—

"How are you, governor?"

"I am happy to say, I am pretty well, sir," said the man, speaking with great deliberation, and closing the book. "I hope you are the same, sir?" . . .

"How was it, you worn't one of us, last night?" inquired Sam, scrubbing his face with the towel. "You seem one of the jolly sort—looks as convivial as a live trout in a lime basket," added Mr Weller, in an undertone.

"I was out last night, with my master," replied the stranger.

"What's his name?" inquired Mr Weller, colouring up very red with sudden excitement, and the friction of the towel combined.

"Fitz-Marshall," said the mulberry man.

"Give us your hand," said Mr Weller, advancing; "I should like to know you. I like your appearance, old fellow."

This was, of course, Jingle's accomplice, Job Trotter, who lured Mr Pickwick with the tale that his master was about to elope with one of the pupils of a girls' school, described as " a large, old, red-brick house, just outside the town."

Sam learned of the plot in the adjacent tap-room over " an exhilarating compound, formed by mixing together, in a pewter vessel, certain quantities of British Hollands, and the fragrant essence of the clove," and afterwards Job was taken to Mr Pickwick, and begged him to assist in preventing the outrage.

" Well, sir, I was thinking that if you were waiting in the back garden alone, and I was to let you in, at the door which opens into it from the end of the passage, at exactly half-past eleven o'clock, you would be just in the very moment of time to assist me in frustrating the designs of this bad man, by whom I have been unfortunately ensnared." . . .

" I don't like this plan," said Mr Pickwick, after deep meditation. " Why cannot I communicate with the young lady's friends ? "

" Because they live one hundred miles from here, sir," responded Job Trotter.

" That's a clincher," said Mr Weller, aside.

" Then this garden," resumed Mr Pickwick. " How am I to get into it ? "

" The wall is very low, sir, and your servant will give you a leg up."

" My servant will give me a leg up," repeated Mr Pickwick, mechanically. " You will be sure to be near this door, that you speak of ? "

" You cannot mistake it, sir; it's the only one that opens into the garden. Tap at it, when you hear the clock strike, and I will open it instantly."

THE STABLE YARD AT THE ANGEL, BURY ST. EDMUNDS

'Early on the ensuing morning, Mr Weller was dispelling all the feverish remains of the previous evening's conviviality, through the instrumentality of a halfpenny showerbath (having induced a young gentleman attached to the stable-department, by the offer of that coin, to pump over his head and face, until he was perfectly restored).'

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"I don't like the plan," said Mr Pickwick; "but as I see no other, and as the happiness of this young lady's whole life is at stake, I adopt it. I shall be sure to be there."

Thus, for the second time, did Mr Pickwick's innate good-feeling involve him in an enterprise, from which he would most willingly have stood aloof.

"What is the name of the house?" inquired Mr Pickwick.

"Westgate House, sir. You turn a little to the right when you get to the end of the town; it stands by itself, some little distance off the high road, with the name on a brass plate on the gate."

"I know it," said Mr Pickwick. "I observed it once before, when I was in this town. You may depend upon me."

Mr Trotter made another bow, and turned to depart, when Mr Pickwick thrust a guinea into his hand.

"You're a fine fellow," said Mr Pickwick, "and I admire your goodness of heart. No thanks. Remember —eleven o'clock."

What is said to be the original of Westgate House still stands in Southgate Street, but it is more likely that Dickens had in mind Eastgate House in Rochester (afterwards the Miss Twinkleton's Academy of *Edwin Drood*) when penning the description. However, as we gaze at the wall by the side of the red brick building, we conjure up the scene Dickens has pictured for us, and we can see the portly Pickwick in the very act of scaling the wall, assisted by Sam Weller.

V

There was a bright moon, but it was behind the clouds. It was a fine dry night, but it was most uncommonly dark. Paths, hedges, fields, houses, and trees, were enveloped in one deep shade. . . .

They found the house, read the brass plate, walked round the wall, and stopped at that portion of it which divided them from the bottom of the garden.

"You will return to the inn, Sam, when you have assisted me over," said Mr Pickwick.

"Very well, sir."

"And you will sit up, 'till I return."

"Cert'nly, sir."

"Take hold of my leg; and, when I say 'Over,' raise me gently."

"All right, sir."

Having settled these preliminaries, Mr Pickwick grasped the top of the wall, and gave the word "Over," which was very literally obeyed. Whether his body partook in some degree of the elasticity of his mind, or whether Mr Weller's notions of a gentle push were of a somewhat rougher description than Mr Pickwick's, the immediate effect of his assistance was to jerk that immortal gentleman completely over the wall on to the bed beneath, where, after crushing three gooseberry bushes and a rose-tree, he finally alighted at full length.

"You ha'n't hurt yourself, I hope, sir?" said Sam, in a loud whisper, as soon as he recovered from the surprise consequent upon the mysterious disappearance of his master.

"I have not hurt *myself*, Sam, certainly," replied Mr Pickwick, from the other side of the wall, "but I rather think that *you* have hurt me."

"I hope not, sir," said Sam.

"Never mind," said Mr Pickwick, rising, "it's nothing but a few scratches. Go away, or we shall be overheard."

"Good-bye, sir."

"Good-bye."

With stealthy steps Sam Weller departed, leaving Mr Pickwick alone in the garden.

Lights occasionally appeared in the different windows of the house, or glanced from the staircases, as if the inmates were retiring to rest. Not caring to go too near the door, until the appointed time, Mr Pickwick crouched into an angle of the wall, and awaited its arrival.

It was a situation which might well have depressed the spirits of many a man. Mr Pickwick, however, felt neither depression nor misgiving. He knew that his purpose was in the main a good one, and he placed implicit reliance on the high-minded Job. It was dull, certainly; not to say, dreary; but a contemplative man can always employ himself in meditation. Mr Pickwick had meditated himself into a doze, when he was roused by the chimes of the neighbouring church ringing out the hour—half-past eleven.

"That's the time," thought Mr Pickwick, getting cautiously on his feet. He looked up at the house. The lights had disappeared, and the shutters were closed —all in bed, no doubt. He walked on tip-toe to the door, and gave a gentle tap. Two or three minutes passing without any reply, he gave another tap rather louder, and then another rather louder than that.

At length the sound of feet was audible upon the stairs, and then the light of a candle shone through the key-hole of the door. There was a good deal of unchaining and unbolting, and the door was slowly opened.

Now the door opened outwards: and as the door

opened wider and wider, Mr Pickwick receded behind it, more and more. What was his astonishment when he just peeped out, by way of caution, to see that the person who had opened it was—not Job Trotter, but a servant-girl with a candle in her hand! Mr Pickwick drew in his head again, with the swiftness displayed by that admirable melo-dramatic performer, Punch, when he lies in wait for the flat-headed comedian with the tin box of music.

"It must have been the cat, Sarah," said the girl, addressing herself to some one in the house. "Puss, puss, puss—tit, tit, tit."

But no animal being decoyed by these blandishments, the girl slowly closed the door, and re-fastened it; leaving Mr Pickwick drawn up straight against the wall.

"This is very curious," thought Mr Pickwick. "They are sitting up, beyond their usual hour, I suppose. Extremely unfortunate, that they should have chosen this night, of all others, for such a purpose —exceedingly." And with these thoughts, Mr Pickwick cautiously retired to the angle of the wall in which he had been before ensconced; waiting until such time as he might deem it safe to repeat the signal. . . .

"What a dreadful situation," said Mr Pickwick, pausing to wipe his brow. He looked up at the house—all was dark. They must be gone to bed now. He would try the signal again.

He walked on tip-toe across the moist gravel, and tapped at the door. He held his breath, and listened at the key-hole. No reply: very odd. Another knock. He listened again. There was a low whispering inside, and then a voice cried—

"Who's there?"

"That's not Job," thought Mr Pickwick, hastily drawing himself straight up against the wall again. "It's a woman."

He had scarcely had time to form this conclusion,

when a window above stairs was thrown up, and three or four female voices repeated the query—"Who's there?"

Mr Pickwick dared not move hand or foot. It was clear that the whole establishment was roused. He made up his mind to remain where he was, until the alarm had subsided: and then to make a supernatural effort, and get over the wall, or perish in the attempt.

Like all Mr Pickwick's determinations, this was the best that could be made under the circumstances; but, unfortunately, it was founded upon the assumption that they would not venture to open the door again. What was his discomfiture, when he heard the chain and bolts withdrawn, and saw the door slowly opening, wider and wider! He retreated into the corner, step by step; but do what he would, the interposition of his own person, prevented its being opened to its utmost width.

"Who's there?" screamed a numerous chorus of treble voices from the stair-case inside, consisting of the spinster lady of the establishment, three teachers, five female servants, and thirty boarders, all half-dressed, and in a forest of curl-papers.

Of course Mr Pickwick didn't say who *was* there: and then the burden of the chorus changed into—"Lor'! I am so frightened."

"Cook," said the lady abbess, who took care to be on the top stair, the very last of the group—"Cook, why don't you go a little way into the garden?"

"Please ma'am, I don't like," responded the cook.

"Lor', what a stupid thing that cook is!" said the thirty boarders.

"Cook," said the lady abbess, with great dignity, "don't answer me, if you please. I insist upon your looking into the garden, immediately."

Here the cook began to cry, and the house-maid

said it was "a shame!" for which partisanship she received a month's warning on the spot.

"Do you hear, cook?" said the lady abbess, stamping her foot, impatiently.

"Don't you hear your missis, cook?" said the three teachers.

"What an impudent thing, that cook is!" said the thirty boarders.

The unfortunate cook, thus strongly urged, advanced a step or two, and holding her candle just where it prevented her from seeing anything at all, declared there was nothing there, and it must have been the wind. The door was just going to be closed in consequence, when an inquisitive boarder, who had been peeping between the hinges, set up a fearful screaming, which called back the cook and the housemaid, and all the more adventurous, in no time.

"What is the matter with Miss Smithers?" said the lady abbess, as the aforesaid Miss Smithers proceeded to go into hysterics of four young lady power.

"Lor', Miss Smithers dear," said the other nine-and-twenty boarders.

"Oh, the man—the man—behind the door!" screamed Miss Smithers.

The lady abbess no sooner heard this appalling cry, than she retreated to her own bedroom, double-locked the door, and fainted away comfortably. The boarders, and the teachers, and the servants, fell back upon the stairs, and upon each other; and never was such a screaming, and fainting, and struggling, beheld. In the midst of the tumult Mr Pickwick emerged from his concealment, and presented himself amongst them.

"Ladies—dear ladies," said Mr Pickwick.

"Oh, he says we're dear," cried the oldest and ugliest teacher. "Oh, the wretch!"

"Ladies," roared Mr Pickwick, rendered desperate

THE ADVENTURE AT THE LADIES' SCHOOL
AT BURY ST. EDMUNDS

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by the danger of his situation. "Hear me. I am no robber. I want the lady of the house."

"Oh, what a ferocious monster!" screamed another teacher. "He wants Miss Tomkins."

Here there was a general scream.

"Ring the alarm bell, somebody!" cried a dozen voices.

"Don't—don't," shouted Mr Pickwick. "Look at me. Do I look like a robber! My dear ladies—you may bind me hand and leg, or lock me up in a closet, if you like. Only hear what I have got to say—only hear me."

"How did you come in our garden?" faltered the housemaid.

"Call the lady of the house, and I'll tell her everything—everything," said Mr Pickwick, exerting his lungs to the utmost pitch. "Call her—only be quiet, and call her, and you shall hear everything."

It might have been Mr Pickwick's appearance, or it might have been his manner, or it might have been the temptation—irresistible to a female mind—of hearing something at present enveloped in mystery, that reduced the more reasonable portion of the establishment (some four individuals) to a state of comparative quiet. By them it was proposed, as a test of Mr Pickwick's sincerity, that he should immediately submit to personal restraint; and that gentleman having consented to hold a conference with Miss Tomkins, from the interior of a closet in which the day boarders hung their bonnets and sandwich-bags, he at once stepped into it of his own accord, and was securely locked in. This revived the others; and Miss Tomkins having been brought to, and brought down, the conference began.

"What did you do in my garden, Man?" said Miss Tomkins, in a faint voice.

"I came to warn you, that one of your young ladies

was going to elope to-night," replied Mr Pickwick, from the interior of the closet.

"Elope!" exclaimed Miss Tomkins, the three teachers, the thirty boarders, and the five servants. "Who with?"

"Your friend, Mr Charles Fitz-Marshall."

"*My* friend! I don't know any such person."

"Well; Mr Jingle, then."

"I never heard the name in my life."

"Then, I have been deceived, and deluded," said Mr Pickwick. "I have been the victim of a conspiracy—a foul and base conspiracy. Send to the Angel, my dear ma'am, if you don't believe me. Send to the Angel for Mr Pickwick's man-servant, I implore you ma'am."

"He must be respectable—he keeps a man-servant," said Miss Tomkins to the writing and ciphering governess.

"It's my opinion, Miss Tomkins," said the writing and ciphering governess, "that his man-servant keeps him. *I* think he's a madman, Miss Tomkins, and the other's his keeper."

"I think you are very right, Miss Gwynn," responded Miss Tomkins. "Let two of the servants repair to the Angel, and let the others remain here, to protect us."

So two of the servants were despatched to the Angel in search of Mr Samuel Weller: and the remaining three stopped behind to protect Miss Tomkins, and the three teachers, and the thirty boarders. And Mr Pickwick sat down in the closet, beneath a grove of sandwich bags, and awaited the return of the messengers, with all the philosophy and fortitude he could summon to his aid.

An hour and a half elapsed before they came back, and when they did come, Mr Pickwick recognised, in addition to the voice of Mr Samuel Weller, two other voices, the tones of which struck familiarly on his ear;

but whose they were, he could not for the life of him call to mind.

A very brief conversation ensued. The door was unlocked. Mr Pickwick stepped out of the closet, and found himself in the presence of the whole establishment of Westgate House, Mr Samuel Weller, and—old Wardle, and his destined son-in-law, Mr Trundle!

"My dear friend," said Mr Pickwick, running forward and grasping Wardle's hand, "my dear friend, pray, for Heaven's sake, explain to this lady the unfortunate and dreadful situation in which I am placed. You must have heard it from my servant; say, at all events, my dear fellow, that I am neither a robber nor a madman."

"I have said so, my dear friend. I have said so already," replied Mr Wardle, shaking the right hand of his friend, while Mr Trundle shook the left. . . .

Mr Pickwick's explanation having already been partially made, was soon concluded. But neither in the course of his walk home with his friends, nor afterwards when seated before a blazing fire at the supper he so much needed, could a single observation be drawn from him. He seemed bewildered and amazed.

Later, when retiring for the night, the following conversation took place between Sam and his master:

"Jingle suspected my design, and set that fellow on you, with this story, I suppose?" said Mr Pickwick, half choking.

"Just that, sir," replied Mr Weller.

"It was all false, of course?"

"All, sir," replied Mr Weller. "Reg'lar do, sir; artful dodge."

"I don't think he'll escape us quite so easily the next time, Sam?" said Mr Pickwick.

"I don't think he will, sir."

"Whenever I meet that Jingle again, wherever it is," said Mr Pickwick, raising himself in bed, and indenting his pillow with a tremendous blow, "I'll inflict personal chastisement on him, in addition to the exposure he so richly merits. I will, or my name is not Pickwick."

"And venever I catches hold o' that there melancholly chap with the black hair," said Sam, "if I don't bring some real water into his eyes, for once in a way, my name a'nt Weller. Good night, sir."

As a result of this adventure, Mr Pickwick was confined to his room in the Angel Hotel with an attack of rheumatism and was consoled by his friends on their arrival. It was whilst staying here that he received notice from Dodson & Fogg of Mrs Bardell's action for breach of promise, which caused him to return to London. However, before he did so, his old friend Wardle arranged a shooting party on Sir Geoffrey Manning's grounds, which afforded Dickens an opportunity for writing one of the most humorous chapters in the book, in which Mr Winkle distinguished himself with the gun, Mr Pickwick with the cold punch, and gave Phiz, the artist, the opportunity of drawing that delightful picture of "Mr Pickwick in the Pound."

For two days after the breakfast at Mrs Hunter's, Tupman, Snodgrass and Winkle remained in Eatanswill awaiting news from Mr Pickwick. The somewhat innocent indiscretions of Mr Winkle in relation to Mrs Pott, fanned by the rival newspaper, resulted in a rupture between that worthy and Mr Pott, but the misunderstanding was soon dispelled, thanks to the

tactics adopted by Mrs Pott. Fortunately a letter had been received by Mr Tupman that morning from Mr Pickwick asking the three friends to join him at Bury that day, and they accordingly arranged to leave by the coach at noon: Mr Winkle vowing he deserved to be horsewhipped if he ever mixed himself up with these people again.

At Bury they found not only Mr Pickwick and Sam, but old Wardle and Trundle too, who had arrived for the shooting on September first. At the request of Mr Pickwick, Mr Winkle detailed the malicious libel of the *Eatanswill Independent,* and the consequent excitement of the editor.

Mr Pickwick's brows darkened during the recital. His friends observed it, and, when Mr Winkle had concluded, maintained a profound silence. Mr Pickwick struck the table emphatically with his clenched fist, and spoke as follows:

"Is it not a wonderful circumstance," said Mr Pickwick, "that we seem destined to enter no man's house without involving him in some degree of trouble? Does it not, I ask, bespeak the indiscretion, or, worse than that, the blackness of heart—that I should say so!—of my followers, that, beneath whatever roof they locate, they disturb the peace of mind and happiness of some confiding female? Is it not, I say——"

Mr Pickwick would in all probability have gone on for some time, had not the entrance of Sam, with a letter, caused him to break off in his eloquent discourse. He passed his handkerchief across his forehead, took off his spectacles, wiped them, and put them on again; and his voice had recovered its wonted softness of tone when he said:

"What have you there, Sam?"

"Called at the Post-office just now, and found this here letter, as has laid there for two days," replied Mr Weller. "It's sealed with a vafer, and directed in round hand."

"I don't know this hand," said Mr Pickwick, opening the letter. "Mercy on us! what's this? It must be a jest, it—it—can't be true."

The letter was dated from Freeman's Court, Cornhill, August 28th, 1830, and signed Dodson & Fogg, and gave notice of the issue of a writ against Mr Pickwick at the instance of Mrs Bardell, for breach of promise of marriage, in which the damages were laid at fifteen hundred pounds, which, in view of Mr Pickwick's outpourings of a few moments before, caused Winkle and company not a little merriment.

"I'll have it explained, though," said Mr Pickwick, raising his head and hammering the table. "I'll see this Dodson and Fogg! I'll go to London to-morrow."

"Not to-morrow," said Wardle; "you're too lame."

"Well, then, next day."

"Next day is the first of September, and you're pledged to ride out with us, as far as Sir Geoffrey Manning's grounds, at all events, and to meet us at lunch, if you don't take the field."

"Well, then, the day after," said Mr Pickwick; "Thursday.—Sam!"

"Sir," replied Mr Weller.

"Take two places outside to London, on Thursday morning, for yourself and me."

"Wery well, sir."

Mr Weller left the room, and departed slowly on his

errand, with his hands in his pockets, and his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Rum feller, the hemperor," said Mr Weller, as he walked slowly up the street. "Think o' his making up to that ere Mrs Bardell—vith a little boy, too! Always the vay with these here old 'uns hows'ever, as is such steady goers to look at. I didn't think he'd ha' done it, though—I didn't think he'd ha' done it!" Moralising in this strain, Mr Samuel Weller bent his steps towards the booking-office.

VI

The birds, who, happily for their own peace of mind and personal comfort, were in blissful ignorance of the preparations which had been making to astonish them, on the first of September, hailed it no doubt, as one of the pleasantest mornings they had seen that season. Many a young partridge who strutted complacently among the stubble, with all the finicking coxcombry of youth, and many an older one who watched his levity out of his little round eye, with the contemptuous air of a bird of wisdom and experience, alike unconscious of their approaching doom, basked in the fresh morning air with lively and blithesome feelings, and a few hours afterwards were laid low upon the earth. But we grow affecting: let us proceed.

In plain common-place matter-of-fact, then, it was a fine morning—so fine that you would scarcely have believed that the few months of an English summer had yet flown by. Hedges, fields, and trees, hill and moorland, presented to the eye their ever-varying shades of deep rich green, scarce a leaf had fallen, scarce a sprinkle of yellow mingled with the hues of summer, warned you that autumn had begun. The sky was cloudless, the sun shone out bright and warm; the songs

of birds, and hum of myriads of summer insects, filled the air; and the cottage gardens, crowded with flowers of every rich and beautiful tint, sparkled, in the heavy dew, like beds of glittering jewels. Everything bore the stamp of summer, and none of its beautiful colours had yet faded from the dye.

Such was the morning, when an open carriage, in which were three Pickwickians (Mr Snodgrass having preferred to remain at home), Mr Wardle, and Mr Trundle, with Sam Weller on the box beside the driver, pulled up by a gate at the road-side, before which stood a tall, raw-boned gamekeeper, and a half-booted, leather-leggined boy: each bearing a bag of capacious dimensions, and accompanied by a brace of pointers. . .

"Where did you tell the boy to meet us with the snack, Martin?" inquired Wardle.

"Side of One-tree Hill, at twelve o'clock, sir."

"That's not Sir Geoffrey's land, is it?"

"No, sir; but it's close by it. It's Captain Boldwig's land; but there'll be nobody to interrupt us, and there's a fine bit of turf there."

"Very well," said old Wardle. "Now the sooner we're off the better. Will you join us at twelve, then, Pickwick?"

Mr Pickwick was particularly desirous to view the sport, the more especially as he was rather anxious in respect of Mr Winkle's life and limbs. On so inviting a morning, too, it was very tantalising to turn back, and leave his friends to enjoy themselves. It was, therefore, with a very rueful air that he replied,—

"Why, I suppose I must."

"An't the gentleman a shot, sir?" inquired the long gamekeeper.

"No," replied Wardle; "and he's lame besides."

"I should very much like to go," said Mr Pickwick—"very much."

There was a short pause of commiseration.

"There's a barrow t'other side the hedge," said the boy. "If the gentleman's servant would wheel along the paths, he could keep nigh us, and we could lift it over the stiles and that."

"The wery thing," said Mr Weller, who was a party interested, inasmuch as he ardently longed to see the sport. "The wery thing. Well said, Small-check; I'll have it out, in a minute."

But here a difficulty arose. The long gamekeeper resolutely protested against the introduction into a shooting-party, of a gentleman in a barrow, as a gross violation of all established rules and precedents.

It was a great objection, but not an insurmountable one. The gamekeeper having been coaxed and feed, and having, moreover, eased his mind by "punching" the head of the inventive youth who had first suggested the use of the machine, Mr Pickwick was placed in it, and off the party set; Wardle and the long gamekeeper leading the way, and Mr Pickwick in the barrow, propelled by Sam, bringing up the rear.

"Stop, Sam," said Mr Pickwick, when they had got half across the first field.

"What's the matter now?" said Wardle.

"I won't suffer this barrow to be moved another step," said Mr Pickwick, resolutely, "unless Winkle carries that gun of his in a different manner."

"How *am* I to carry it?" said the wretched Winkle.

"Carry it with the muzzle to the ground," replied Mr Pickwick.

"It's so unsportsman-like," reasoned Winkle.

"I don't care whether it's unsportsman-like or not," replied Mr Pickwick; "I am not going to be shot in a wheelbarrow, for the sake of appearances, to please anybody."

"I know the gentleman 'll put that ere charge into somebody afore he's done," growled the long man.

"Well, well—I don't mind," said poor Mr Winkle, turning his gun stock uppermost;—"there."

"Anythin' for a quiet life," said Mr Weller; and on they went again.

"Stop!" said Mr Pickwick, after they had gone a few yards further.

"What now?" said Wardle.

"That gun of Tupman's is not safe: I know it isn't," said Mr Pickwick.

"Eh? What! not safe?" said Mr Tupman, in a tone of great alarm.

"Not as you are carrying it," said Mr Pickwick. "I am very sorry to make any further objection, but I cannot consent to go on, unless you carry it as Winkle does his."

"I think you had better, sir," said the long gamekeeper, "or you're quite as likely to lodge the charge in yourself as in anything else."

Mr Tupman, with the most obliging haste, placed his piece in the position required, and the party moved on again; the two amateurs marching with reversed arms, like a couple of privates at a royal funeral.

. . . . . .

"Well," said Wardle, walking up to the side of the barrow, and wiping the streams of perspiration from his jolly red face; "smoking day, isn't it?"

"It is, indeed," replied Mr Pickwick. "The sun is tremendously hot, even to me. I don't know how you must feel it."

"Why," said the old gentleman, "pretty hot. It's past twelve, though. You see that green hill there?"

"Certainly."

"That's the place where we are to lunch; and, by Jove, there's the boy with the basket, punctual as clockwork!"

"So he is," said Mr Pickwick, brightening up. "Good boy, that. I'll give him a shilling, presently. Now, then, Sam, wheel away."

"Hold on, sir," said Mr Weller, invigorated with the prospect of refreshments. "Out of the vay, young leathers. If you walley my precious life don't upset me, as the gen'l'm'n said to the driver when they was a carryin' him to Tyburn." And quickening his pace to a sharp run, Mr Weller wheeled his master nimbly to the green hill, shot him dexterously out by the very side of the basket, and proceeded to unpack it with the utmost dispatch.

"Weal pie," said Mr Weller, soliloquising, as he arranged the eatables on the grass. "Wery good thing is weal pie, when you know the lady as made it, and is quite sure it ain't kittens; and arter all though, where's the odds, when they're so like weal that the wery pie-men themselves don't know the difference?"

. . . . . .

"Tongue; well that's a wery good thing when it an't a woman's. Bread—knuckle o' ham, reg'lar picter—cold beef in slices, wery good. What's in them stone jars, young touch-and-go?"

"Beer in this one," replied the boy, taking from his shoulder a couple of large stone bottles, fastened together by a leathern strap—"cold punch in t'other."

"And a wery good notion of a lunch it is, take it altogether," said Mr Weller, surveying his arrangements of the repast with great satisfaction. "Now, gen'l'm'n, 'fall on,' as the English said to the French when they fixed bagginets."

It needed no second invitation to induce the party to yield full justice to the meal; and as little pressing did it require to induce Mr Weller, the long gamekeeper, and the two boys, to station themselves on the grass,

at a little distance, and do good execution upon a decent proportion of the viands. An old oak afforded a pleasant shelter to the group, and a rich prospect of arable and meadow land, intersected with luxuriant hedges, and richly ornamented with wood, lay spread out before them.

"This is delightful—thoroughly delightful!" said Mr Pickwick, the skin of whose expressive countenance was rapidly peeling off, with exposure to the sun.

"So it is: so it is, old fellow," replied Wardle. "Come, a glass of punch!"

"With great pleasure," said Mr Pickwick; the satisfaction of whose countenance, after drinking it, bore testimony to the sincerity of the reply.

"Good," said Mr Pickwick, smacking his lips. "Very good. I'll take another. Cool; very cool. Come, gentlemen," continued Mr Pickwick, still retaining his hold upon the jar, "a toast. Our friends at Dingley Dell."

The toast was drunk with loud acclamations.

"Well that certainly is most capital cold punch," said Mr Pickwick, looking earnestly at the stone bottle; "and the day is extremely warm, and—Tupman, my dear friend, a glass of punch?"

"With the greatest delight," replied Mr Tupman; and having drank that glass, Mr Pickwick took another, just to see whether there was any orange peel in the punch, because orange peel always disagreed with him; and finding that there was not, Mr Pickwick took another glass to the health of their absent friend, and then felt himself imperatively called upon to propose another in honour of the punch-compounder, unknown.

This constant succession of glasses produced considerable effect upon Mr Pickwick; his countenance beamed with the most sunny smiles, laughter played around his lips, and good-humoured merriment twinkled

in his eye. Yielding by degrees to the influence of the exciting liquid, rendered more so by the heat, Mr Pickwick expressed a strong desire to recollect a song which he had heard in his infancy, and the attempt proving abortive, sought to stimulate his memory with more glasses of punch, which appeared to have quite a contrary effect; for, from forgetting the words of the song, he began to forget how to articulate any words at all; and finally, after rising to his legs to address the company in an eloquent speech, he fell into the barrow, and fast asleep, simultaneously.

The basket having been repacked, and it being found perfectly impossible to awaken Mr Pickwick from his torpor, some discussion took place whether it would be better for Mr Weller to wheel his master back again, or to leave him where he was, until they should all be ready to return. The latter course was at length decided on; and as the further expedition was not to exceed an hour's duration, and as Mr Weller begged very hard to be one of the party, it was determined to leave Mr Pickwick asleep in the barrow, and to call for him on their return. So away they went, leaving Mr Pickwick snoring most comfortably in the shade.

That Mr Pickwick would have continued to snore in the shade until his friends came back, or, in default thereof, until the shades of evening had fallen on the landscape, there appears no reasonable cause to doubt; always supposing that he had been suffered to remain there in peace. But he was *not* suffered to remain there in peace. And this was what prevented him.

Captain Boldwig was a little fierce man in a stiff black neckerchief and blue surtout, who, when he did condescend to walk about his property, did it in company with a thick rattan stick with a brass ferrule, and a gardener and sub-gardener with meek faces, to whom (the gardeners, not the stick) Captain Boldwig gave his orders with all due grandeur and ferocity: for Captain

Boldwig's wife's sister had married a Marquis, and the Captain's house was a villa, and his land "grounds," and it was all very high, and mighty, and great.

Mr Pickwick had not been asleep half an hour when little Captain Boldwig, followed by the two gardeners, came striding along as fast as his size and importance would let him; and when he came near the oak tree, Captain Boldwig paused, and drew a long breath, and looked at the prospect as if he thought the prospect ought to be highly gratified at having him to take notice of it.

"I beg your pardon, sir—but I think there have been trespassers here to-day."

"Ha!" said the Captain, scowling around him.

"Yes, sir—they have been dining here, I think, sir."

"Why, confound their audacity, so they have," said Captain Boldwig, as the crumbs and fragments that were strewn upon the grass met his eye. "They have actually been devouring their food here. I wish I had the vagabonds here!" said the Captain, clenching the thick stick.

"I wish I had the vagabonds here," said the Captain, wrathfully.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Wilkins, "but—"

"But what? Eh?" roared the Captain; and following the timid glance of Wilkins, his eyes encountered the wheelbarrow and Mr Pickwick.

"Who are you, you rascal?" said the Captain, administering several pokes to Mr Pickwick's body with the thick stick. "What's your name?"

"Cold punch," murmured Mr Pickwick, as he sunk to sleep again.

"What?" demanded Captain Boldwig.

No reply.

"What did he say his name was?" asked the Captain.

"Punch, I think, sir," replied Wilkins.

"That's his impudence, that's his confounded impudence," said Captain Boldwig. "He's only feigning to be asleep now," said the Captain, in a high passion. "He's drunk; he's a drunken plebian. Wheel him away, Wilkins, wheel him away directly."

"Where shall I wheel him to, sir?" inquired Wilkins, with great timidity.

"Wheel him to the devil," replied Captain Boldwig.

"Very well, sir," said Wilkins.

"Stay," said the Captain.

Wilkins stopped accordingly.

"Wheel him," said the Captain, "wheel him to the Pound; and let us see whether he calls himself Punch when he comes to himself. He shall not bully me, he shall not bully me. Wheel him away."

Away Mr Pickwick was wheeled in compliance with this imperious mandate; and the great Captain Boldwig, swelling with indignation, proceeded on his walk.

Inexpressible was the astonishment of the little party when they returned, to find that Mr Pickwick had disappeared, and taken the wheelbarrow with him. It was the most mysterious and unaccountable thing that was ever heard of. For a lame man to have got upon his legs without any previous notice, and walked off, would have been most extraordinary; but when it came to his wheeling a heavy barrow before him, by way of amusement, it grew positively miraculous. They searched every nook and corner round, together and separately; they shouted, whistled, laughed, called—and all with the same result. Mr Pickwick was not to be found. After some hours of fruitless search, they arrived at the unwelcome conclusion that they must go home without him.

Meanwhile Mr Pickwick had been wheeled to the Pound, and safely deposited therein, fast asleep in the wheelbarrow, to the immeasurable delight and satisfaction, not only of all the boys in the village, but

three-fourths of the whole population, who had gathered round, in expectation of his waking. If their most intense gratification had been excited by seeing him wheeled in, how many hundredfold was their joy increased when, after a few indistinct cries of "Sam!" he sat up in the barrow, and gazed with indescribable astonishment on the faces before him.

A general shout was of course the signal of his having woke up; and his involuntary inquiry of "What's the matter?" occasioned another, louder than the first, if possible.

"Here's a game!" roared the populace.

"Where am I?" exclaimed Mr Pickwick.

"In the Pound," replied the mob.

"How came I here? What was I doing? Where was I brought from?"

"Boldwig! Captain Boldwig!" was the only reply.

"Let me out," cried Mr Pickwick. "Where's my servant? Where are my friends?"

"You an't got no friends. Hurrah!" Then there came a turnip, then a potato, and then an egg: with a few other little tokens of the playful disposition of the many-headed.

How long this scene might have lasted, or how much Mr Pickwick might have suffered, no one can tell, had not a carriage, which was driving swiftly by, suddenly pulled up, from whence there descended old Wardle and Sam Weller, the former of whom, in far less time than it takes to write it, if not to read it, had made his way to Mr Pickwick's side, and placed him in the vehicle.

"I'll give directions for the commencement of an action for false imprisonment against this Captain Boldwig, directly I get to London," said Mr Pickwick, as soon as the carriage turned out of the town.

"We were trespassing, it seems," said Wardle.

MR PICKWICK IN THE POUND

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"I don't care," said Mr Pickwick, "I'll bring the action."

"No, you won't," said Wardle.

"I will, by——" but as there was a humorous expression in Wardle's face, Mr Pickwick checked himself, and said: "Why not?"

"Because," said old Wardle, half-bursting with laughter, "because they might turn round on some of us, and say we had taken too much cold punch."

Do what he would, a smile would come into Mr Pickwick's face; the smile extended into a laugh; the laugh into a roar; the roar became general. So, to keep up their good humour, they stopped at the first roadside tavern they came to, and ordered a glass of brandy and water all round, with a magnum of extra strength for Mr Samuel Weller.

. . . . . .

It is interesting to note the chronology of some of these events. First as to the date of Dodson & Fogg's letter, August 28th. This fits in very well with the shooting for which old Wardle and Trundle had come to Bury, as the season commences on September the first. The letter arrived at the post office at Bury on August 29th, and, according to Sam, had lain there two days, August 29th and 30th. It was on the evening of the 30th that Sam fetched it. Mr Pickwick wished to go to London on the morrow (August 31st) but was too lame with rheumatism, the next day was the first of September, so the day after, Thursday, September 2nd, was chosen for the return to London. So far all is well (September 2nd, 1830, was on a Sunday).

Now, according to Chapter 18, the three members of the party remained behind at Eatanswill "for two days

after the breakfast at Mrs Hunter's," that is to say, on August 28th and 29th. The breakfast itself was on the 26th, because Mr Pickwick left for Bury that day; Sam met Job Trotter in the Angel yard the next morning (27th); the evening's adventure at the Ladies' School caused Mr Pickwick to have rheumatism, which kept him in bed for two days (28th and 29th). On the third day (30th) he was able to sit up, and invited Mr Wardle and Mr Trundle to take wine with him that evening, whilst he read to them the tale of The Parish Clerk, edited by himself from Sam Weller's notes: at any rate, the three friends left Eatanswill for Bury on the 30th. Now, on the 27th or 28th, Mr Pickwick had no idea of going to Bury until he heard that Jingle was living there: yet on the 28th, Dodson & Fogg addressed a letter to him there. How did these clever lawyers know that Mr Pickwick was at Bury: that gentleman could not have given the address to any correspondent, as otherwise he would have sent Sam regularly for the letters, and this one would not have "laid there for two days."

Another point is in the year, which has suddenly jumped from 1827 to 1830.

The pilgrimages started on the 13th of May 1827—Chapter 2 is clear and unmistakeable on this point. The visit to Kent occupied only two weeks, and there was no interval of importance between the return to London from Cobham and the setting out for Eatanswill: yet we are not only hurriedly jumped from the month of June in the year 1827 to the month of August, when Mr Pickwick and Sam journey to Bury from Eatanswill,

but the year is advanced to 1830, after they have been there but three or four days.

In the first pilgrimage, Dickens also reverts to 1830 in making Jingle refer to the Epic poem of ten thousand lines which he had written on the "Revolution of July" at which he was present. Later editions contained a footnote referring to this as "a remarkable instance of the prophetic force of Mr Jingle's imagination: this dialogue occurring in the year 1827, and the Revolution in 1830."

Then, when at Mr Pott's house on the evening of their arrival at Eatanswill, Mr Pott calls to the servant, "Jane, go down into the office and bring me up the file of the Gazette for eighteen hundred and twenty-eight," for the purpose of reading to Mr Pickwick a few of the leaders he wrote at the time of the appointment of the new tollman at the turnpike. Another piece of "Prophetic force."

THE THIRD PILGRIMAGE

THE THIRD PILGRIMAGE

To Ipswich

I

THE morning of Friday, 3rd September, 1827 (it was actually Monday), was devoted to a visit to Messrs Dodson & Fogg at their offices "in the ground floor front of a dingy house at the very farthest end of Freeman's Court, Cornhill," where Mr Pickwick, having relieved his mind of their "disgraceful and rascally proceedings," was taken in charge by Sam Weller. They crossed opposite the Mansion House and bent their steps up Cheapside.

Here Mr Weller displayed his "extensive and peculiar" knowledge of London by directing his master to the nearest place for "a glass of brandy and water warm" to soothe Mr Pickwick's ruffled feelings. "Second court on the right-hand side—last house but vun on the same side of the vay—take the box as stands in the first fireplace 'cos there ain't no leg in the middle o' the table, which all the others has, and it's wery inconvenient."

Here the elder Weller was encountered, and here he expounded his philosophy—

"Take example of your father, my boy, and be wery careful o' widders all your life, 'specially if they've kept a public house."

Here it was, too, that Mr Pickwick received such information of Jingle that made him resolve to follow him once again, and so began his third pilgrimage. Sam Weller in the course of his confidences to his father told how he had been "reg'larly done the other day."

Mr Weller senior listened to the tale with the most profound attention, and, at its termination, said—

"Worn't one o' these chaps slim and tall, with long hair, and the gift o' the gab wery gallopin'?"

Mr Pickwick did not quite understand the last item of description, but, comprehending the first, said "Yes," at a venture.

"T'other's a black-haired chap in mulberry livery, with a wery large head?"

"Yes, yes, he is," said Mr Pickwick and Sam, with great earnestness.

"Then I know where they are, and that's all about it," said Mr Weller; "they're at Ipswich, safe enough, them two."

"No!" said Mr Pickwick.

"Fact," said Mr Weller, "and I'll tell you how I know it. I work an Ipswich coach now and then for a friend o' mine. I worked down the wery day arter the night as you caught the rheumatiz, and at the Black Boy at Chelmsford—the wery place they'd come to—I took 'em up, right through to Ipswich, where the man servant—him in the mulberries—told me they was a goin' to put up for a long time."

"I'll follow him," said Mr Pickwick; "we may as well see Ipswich as any other place. I'll follow him."

"You're quite certain it was them, governor?" inquired Mr Weller, junior.

"Quite, Sammy, quite," replied his father, "for their appearance is wery sing'ler; besides that 'ere, I wondered to see the gen'l'm'n so familiar with his servant; and, more than that, as they sat in front, right behind the box, I heard 'em laughing, and saying how they'd done old Fireworks."

"Old who?" said Mr Pickwick.

"Old Fireworks, sir, by which, I've no doubt, they meant you, sir."

There is nothing positively vile or atrocious in the appellation of "old Fireworks," but still it is by no means a respectful or flattering designation. The recollection of all the wrongs he had sustained at Jingle's hands, had crowded on Mr Pickwick's mind, the moment Mr Weller began to speak: it wanted but a feather to turn the scale, and "old Fireworks" did it.

"I'll follow him," said Mr Pickwick, with an emphatic blow on the table.

"I shall work down to Ipswich the day arter tomorrow, sir," said Mr Weller the elder, "from the Bull in Whitechapel; and if you really mean to go, you'd better go with me."

"So we had," said Mr Pickwick; "very true; I can write to Bury, and tell them to meet me at Ipswich. We will go with you."

They must have spent a long time at the City Tavern, as "eight o'clock had struck" by the time they reached the "secluded groves" of Gray's Inn, to see Mr Perker. Here Sam remarked of the old women—called laundresses—who look after the chambers of the Inns, that they were so called "'cos they has a mortal awersion to washing anythin'." Mr Pickwick spent

the evening at the Magpie & Stump in Clare Market, with Mr Lowton, the clerk of Mr Perker. Here, by referring to the Inns of Court as "curious little nooks in a great place, like London," Mr Pickwick led the way for old Jack Bamber to tell "The Story of the Queer Client," which concerned Clifford's Inn, still in existence behind St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street.

II

On the morning appointed for the journey to Ipswich by the coach that was handled by the elder Weller, Sam Weller arrived at the Bull Inn, Whitechapel, in advance of his master, who was "a cabbin' it," or, as Sam himself said, "a-havin' two mile o' danger at eightpence." When Mr Pickwick arrived he was accosted by a red-haired man "with an inquisitive nose and spectacles" with his numerous luggage, his red bag, and striped bag, and brown paper parcel, and leather hat-box; who informed him that he was also going to Ipswich. This was Mr Peter Magnus, or P.M., Post meridian, or Afternoon, as he facetiously said he sometimes signed himself to intimate acquaintances!

The observation of the elder Weller as he drove out of the inn yard, "Take care of the archvay, gen'lm'n; 'Heads,' as the pieman says," reminds us of Jingle's similar recommendation when the party left the Golden Cross at Charing Cross for their first pilgrimage: and then we read "away went the coach up Whitechapel, to

the admiration of the whole population of that pretty densely populated quarter."

"Not a very nice neighbourhood this, sir," said Sam, with a touch of the hat, which always preceded his entering into conversation with his master.

"It is not indeed, Sam," replied Mr Pickwick, surveying the crowded and filthy street through which they were passing.

"It's a wery remarkable circumstance, sir," said Sam, "that poverty and oysters always seems to go together."

"I don't understand you, Sam," said Mr Pickwick.

"What I mean, sir," said Sam, "is that the poorer a place is, the greater call there seems to be for oysters. Look here, sir; here's a oyster stall to every half-dozen houses. The street's lined vith 'em. Blessed if I don't think that ven a man's wery poor, he rushes out of his lodgings, and eats oysters in reg'ler desperation."

"To be sure he does," said Mr Weller senior; "and it's just the same vith pickled salmon!"

"Those are two very remarkable facts, which never occurred to me before," said Mr Pickwick. "The very first place we stop at, I'll make a note of them."

By this time they had reached the turnpike at Mile End; a profound silence prevailed until they had got two or three miles further on, when Mr Weller senior, turning suddenly to Mr Pickwick, said:

"Wery queer life is a pike-keeper's, sir."

"A what?" said Mr Pickwick.

"A pike-keeper."

"What do you mean by a pike-keeper?" inquired Mr Peter Magnus.

"The old 'un means a turnpike keeper, gen'l'm'n," observed Mr Samuel Weller, in explanation.

"Oh," said Mr Pickwick, "I see. Yes; very curious life. Very uncomfortable."

"They're all on 'em men as has met vith some disappointment in life," said Mr Weller senior.

"Ay, ay?" said Mr Pickwick.

"Yes. Consequence of vich, they retires from the world, and shuts themselves up in pikes; partly with the view of being solitary, and partly to rewenge themselves on mankind, by takin' tolls."

The pauses in the loquacity of Sam Weller were abundantly filled by the communicative Mr Magnus, and we are not given any account of the road they travelled. All at once we are plunged into a description of the town of Ipswich and its noted hostelry.

In the main street of Ipswich, on the left-hand side of the way, a short distance after you have passed through the open space fronting the Town Hall, stands an inn known far and wide by the appellation of The Great White Horse, rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart-horse, which is elevated above the principal door. The Great White Horse is famous in the neighbourhood, in the same degree as a prize ox, or county paper-chronicled turnip, or unwieldy pig—for its enormous size. Never were such labyrinths of uncarpeted passages, such clusters of mouldy, ill-lighted rooms, such huge numbers of small dens for eating or sleeping in, beneath any one roof, as are collected together between the four walls of the Great White Horse at Ipswich.

It was at the door of this overgrown tavern that the London coach stopped, at the same hour every evening; and it was from this same London coach that Mr Pickwick, Sam Weller, and Mr Peter Magnus dis-

THE GREAT WHITE HORSE HOTEL, IPSWICH

'*In the main street of Ipswich, on the left-hand side of the way, a short distance after you have passed through the open space fronting the Town Hall, stands an inn known far and wide by the appellation of The Great White Horse, rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart-horse, which is elevated above the principal door.*'

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mounted, on the particular evening to which this chapter of our history bears reference.

"Do you stop here, sir?" inquired Mr Peter Magnus, when the striped bag, and the red bag, and the brown paper parcel, and the leather hat-box, had all been deposited in the passage. "Do you stop here, sir?"

"I do," said Mr Pickwick.

"Dear me," said Mr Magnus, "I never knew anything like these extraordinary coincidences. Why, I stop here too. I hope we dine together."

"With pleasure," replied Mr Pickwick. "I am not quite certain whether I have any friends here or not, though. Is there any gentleman of the name of Tupman here, waiter?"

A corpulent man, with a fortnight's napkin under his arm, and coeval stockings on his legs, slowly desisted from his occupation of staring down the street, on this question being put to him by Mr Pickwick; and, after minutely inspecting that gentleman's appearance, from the crown of his hat to the lowest button of his gaiters, replied emphatically:

"No."

"Nor any gentleman of the name of Snodgrass?" inquired Mr Pickwick.

"No."

"Nor Winkle?"

"No."

"My friends have not arrived to-day, sir," said Mr Pickwick. "We will dine alone, then. Shew us a private room, waiter."

On this request being preferred, the corpulent man condescended to order the boots to bring in the gentlemen's luggage; and preceding them down a long dark passage, ushered them into a large badly-furnished apartment, with a dirty grate, in which a small fire was making a wretched attempt to be cheerful, but was fast sinking beneath the dispiriting influence of the

place. After the lapse of an hour, a bit of fish and a steak were served up to the travellers, and when the dinner was cleared away, Mr Pickwick and Mr Peter Magnus drew their chairs up to the fire, and having ordered a bottle of the worst possible port wine, at the highest possible price, for the good of the house, drank brandy and water for their own.

It is said that Dickens had a grudge against the inn; and it would certainly appear that he had!

Dickens was in Ipswich in 1835 to report the speeches at the Parliamentary Election of that year; and on the authority of the "Suffolk Chronicle"—for which it is said he was working, he stayed at the "Great White Horse" for two or three weeks, and it is surmised that the adventure, ascribed to Mr Pickwick, with "the middle-aged lady in the yellow curl papers" was an experience of young Dickens himself, and he was so incensed against the place that he wrote of it in the disparaging way to which we have referred.

But, it is pleasant to notice that the hotel is to-day proud of the fact that its name has been handed down to posterity in the pages of *Pickwick*, and nothing gives the manager so much pleasure as to direct you to the room which Mr Pickwick mistook for his own; and there you can see the identical (?) four-poster bedstead, out from the curtains of which Mr Pickwick peeped, to behold the "middle-aged lady, in yellow curl papers," busily engaged in brushing what ladies call their "back hair."

It is also interesting to note that on the occasions of

his visits in 1859 and 1861 for the Readings, Dickens stayed at the Great White Horse, as his letters testify.

III

The pleasant evening with Mr Magnus passed all too quickly and it was "past twelve" when they retired to their respective bedrooms: and now befell one of Mr Pickwick's most remarkable adventures.

Mr Peter Magnus rang the bell for the chambermaid . . . and retired in company with a japanned candlestick, to one side of the house, while Mr Pickwick, and another japanned candlestick, were conducted through a multitude of tortuous windings, to another.

"This is your room, sir," said the chambermaid.

"Very well," replied Mr Pickwick, looking round him. It was a tolerably large double-bedded room, with a fire; upon the whole, a more comfortable-looking apartment than Mr Pickwick's short experience of the accommodations of the Great White Horse had led him to expect.

"Nobody sleeps in the other bed, of course," said Mr Pickwick.

"Oh, no, sir."

"Very good. Tell my servant to bring me up some hot water at half-past eight in the morning, and that I shall not want him any more to-night."

"Yes, sir." And bidding Mr Pickwick good-night, the chambermaid retired, and left him alone.

Mr Pickwick sat himself down in a chair before the fire, and fell into a train of rambling meditations. First he thought of his friends, and wondered when they would join him; then his mind reverted to Mrs Martha

Bardell; and from that lady it wandered, by a natural process, to the dingy counting-house of Dodson and Fogg. From Dodson and Fogg's it flew off at a tangent, to the very centre of the history of the queer client; and then it came back to the Great White Horse at Ipswich, with sufficient clearness to convince Mr Pickwick that he was falling asleep. So he roused himself, and began to undress, when he recollected he had left his watch on the table downstairs.

Now, this watch was a special favourite with Mr Pickwick, having been carried about, beneath the shadow of his waistcoat, for a greater number of years than we feel called upon to state at present. The possibility of going to sleep, unless it were ticking gently beneath his pillow, or in the watch-pocket over his head, had never entered Mr Pickwick's brain. So as it was pretty late now, and he was unwilling to ring his bell at that hour of the night, he slipped on his coat, of which he had just divested himself, and taking the japanned candlestick in his hand, walked quietly downstairs.

The more stairs Mr Pickwick went down, the more stairs there seemed to be to descend, and again and again, when Mr Pickwick got into some narrow passage, and began to congratulate himself on having gained the ground-floor, did another flight of stairs appear before his astonished eyes. At last he reached a stone hall, which he remembered to have seen when he entered the house. Passage after passage did he explore; room after room did he peep into; at length, just as he was on the point of giving up the search in despair, he opened the door of the identical room in which he had spent the evening, and beheld his missing property on the table.

Mr Pickwick seized the watch in triumph, and proceeded to retrace his steps to his bed-chamber. If his progress downwards had been attended with difficulties

and uncertainty, his journey back was infinitely more perplexing. Rows of doors, garnished with boots of every shape, make, and size, branched off in every possible direction. A dozen times did he softly turn the handle of some bedroom door, which resembled his own, when a gruff cry from within of "Who the devil's that?" or "What do you want here?" caused him to steal away, on tiptoe, with a perfectly marvellous celerity. He was reduced to the verge of despair, when an open door attracted his attention. He peeped in—right at last. There were the two beds, whose situation he perfectly remembered, and the fire still burning. His candle, not a long one when he first received it, had flickered away in the drafts of air through when he had passed, and sunk into the socket, just as he closed the door after him. "No matter," said Mr Pickwick, "I can undress myself just as well by the light of the fire."

The bedsteads stood, one on each side of the door; and on the inner side of each was a little path, terminating in a rush-bottomed chair, just wide enough to admit of a person's getting into, or out of bed, on that side, if he or she thought proper. Having carefully drawn the curtains of his bed on the outside, Mr Pickwick sat down on the rush-bottomed chair, and leisurely divested himself of his shoes and gaiters. He then took off and folded up his coat, waistcoat, and neck-cloth, and slowly drawing on his tasseled night-cap, secured it firmly on his head, by tying beneath his chin, the strings which he always had attached to that article of dress. It was at this moment that the absurdity of his recent bewilderment struck upon his mind; and throwing himself back in the rush-bottomed chair, Mr Pickwick laughed to himself so heartily, that it would have been quite delightful to any man of well-constituted mind to have watched the smiles which expanded his amiable features as they shone forth from beneath the night-cap.

"It is the best idea," said Mr Pickwick to himself, smiling till he almost cracked the night-cap strings—"It is the best idea, my losing myself in this place, and wandering about those staircases, that I ever heard of. Droll, droll, very droll." Here Mr Pickwick smiled again, a broader smile than before, and was about to continue the process of undressing, in the best possible humour, when he was suddenly stopped by a most unexpected interruption; to wit, the entrance into the room of some person with a candle, who, after locking the door, advanced to the dressing-table, and set down the light upon it.

The smile that played on Mr Pickwick's features was instantaneously lost in a look of the most unbounded and wonder-stricken surprise. The person, whoever it was, had come in so suddenly and with so little noise, that Mr Pickwick had had no time to call out, or oppose their entrance. Who could it be? A robber? Some evil-minded person who had seen him come upstairs with a handsome watch in his hand, perhaps? What was he to do!

The only way in which Mr Pickwick could catch a glimpse of his mysterious visitor with the least danger of being seen himself, was by creeping on to the bed, and peeping out from between the curtains on the opposite side. To this manœuvre he accordingly resorted. Keeping the curtains carefully closed with his hand, so that nothing more of him could be seen than his face and night-cap, and putting on his spectacles, he mustered up courage and looked out.

Mr Pickwick almost fainted with horror and dismay. Standing before the dressing-glass was a middle-aged lady, in yellow curl papers, busily engaged in brushing what ladies call their "back-hair." However the unconscious middle-aged lady came into that room, it was quite clear that she contemplated remaining there for the night; for she had brought a rushlight and shade

THE AMAZING ADVENTURE AT THE GREAT WHITE HORSE HOTEL, IPSWICH

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with her, which, with praiseworthy precaution against fire, she had stationed in a basin on the floor, where it was glimmering away, like a gigantic lighthouse in a particularly small piece of water.

"Bless my soul," thought Mr Pickwick, "what a dreadful thing!"

"Hem!" said the lady; and in went Mr Pickwick's head with automaton-like rapidity.

"I never met with anything so awful as this,"—thought poor Mr Pickwick, the cold perspiration starting in drops upon his night-cap. "Never. This is fearful."

It was quite impossible to resist the urgent desire to see what was going forward. So out went Mr Pickwick's head again. The prospect was worse than before. The middle-aged lady had finished arranging her hair; had carefully enveloped it in a muslin night-cap with a small plaited border, and was gazing pensively on the fire.

"This matter is growing alarming"—reasoned Mr Pickwick with himself. "I can't allow things to go on in this way. By the self-possession of that lady, it's clear to me that I must have come into the wrong room. If I call out, she'll alarm the house, but if I remain here the consequences will be still more frightful."

Mr Pickwick, it is quite unnecessary to say, was one of the most modest and delicate-minded of mortals. The very idea of exhibiting his night-cap to a lady overpowered him, but he had tied those confounded strings in a knot, and do what he would he couldn't get it off. The disclosure must be made. There was only one other way of doing it. He shrunk behind the curtains, and called out very loudly—

"Ha—hum."

That the lady started at this unexpected sound was evident, by her falling up against the rush-light shade;

that she persuaded herself it must have been the effect of imagination was equally clear, for when Mr Pickwick, under the impression that she had fainted away, stone-dead from fright, ventured to peep out again, she was gazing pensively on the fire as before.

"Most extraordinary female this," thought Mr Pickwick, popping in again. "Ha—hum."

These last sounds, so like those in which, as legends inform us, the ferocious giant Blunderbore was in the habit of expressing his opinion that it was time to lay the cloth, were too distinctly audible, to be again mistaken for the workings of fancy.

"Gracious Heaven!" said the middle-aged lady, "what's that!"

"It's—it's only a gentleman, ma'am," said Mr Pickwick from behind the curtains.

"A gentleman!" said the lady with a terrific scream.

"It's all over," thought Mr Pickwick.

"A strange man!" shrieked the lady. Another instant and the house would be alarmed. Her garments rustled as she rushed towards the door.

"Ma'am"—said Mr Pickwick, thrusting out his head in the extremity of his desperation, "Ma'am."

Now although Mr Pickwick was not actuated by any definite object in putting out his head, it was instantaneously productive of a good effect. The lady, as we have already stated, was near the door. She must pass it to reach the staircase, and she would most undoubtedly have done so by this time had not the sudden apparition of Mr Pickwick's night-cap driven her back into the remotest corner of the apartment, where she stood staring wildly at Mr Pickwick, while Mr Pickwick in his turn stared wildly at her.

"Wretch," said the lady, covering her eyes with her hands, "what do you want here?"

"Nothing, ma'am—nothing whatever, ma'am," said Mr Pickwick earnestly.

"Nothing!" said the lady, looking up.

"Nothing, ma'am, upon my honour," said Mr Pickwick, nodding his head so energetically that the tassel of his night-cap danced again. "I am almost ready to sink, ma'am, beneath the confusion of addressing a lady in my night-cap (here the lady hastily snatched off hers), but I can't get it off, ma'am (here Mr Pickwick gave it a tremendous tug, in proof of the statement). It is evident to me, ma'am, now, that I have mistaken this bedroom for my own. I had not been here five minutes, ma'am, when you suddenly entered it."

"If this improbable story be really true, sir," said the lady, sobbing violently, "you will leave it instantly."

"I will, ma'am, with the greatest pleasure," replied Mr Pickwick.

"Instantly, sir," said the lady.

"Certainly, ma'am," interposed Mr Pickwick very quickly. "Certainly, ma'am. I—I—am very sorry, ma'am," said Mr Pickwick, making his appearance at the bottom of the bed, "to have been the innocent occasion of this alarm and emotion; deeply sorry, ma'am."

The lady pointed to the door. One excellent quality of Mr Pickwick's character was beautifully displayed at this moment, under the most trying circumstances. Although he had hastily put on his hat over his night-cap, after the manner of the old patrol; although he carried his shoes and gaiters in his hand, and his coat and waistcoat over his arm; nothing could subdue his native politeness.

"I am exceedingly sorry, ma'am," said Mr Pickwick, bowing very low.

"If you are, sir, you will at once leave the room," said the lady.

"Immediately, ma'am; this instant, ma'am," said

Mr Pickwick, opening the door, and dropping both his shoes with a crash in so doing.

"I trust, ma'am," resumed Mr Pickwick, gathering up his shoes, and turning round to bow again: "I trust, ma'am, that my unblemished character, and the devoted respect I entertain for your sex, will plead as some slight excuse for this"—But before Mr Pickwick could conclude the sentence the lady had thrust him into the passage, and locked and bolted the door behind him.

Whatever grounds of self-congratulation Mr Pickwick might have for having escaped so quietly from his late awkward situation, his present position was by no means enviable. He was alone, in an open passage, in a strange house, in the middle of the night, half dressed; it was not to be supposed that he could find his way in perfect darkness to a room which he had been wholly unable to discover with a light, and if he made the slightest noise in his fruitless attempts to do so, he stood every chance of being shot at, and perhaps killed, by some wakeful traveller. He had no resource but to remain where he was until daylight appeared. So after groping his way a few paces down the passage, and, to his infinite alarm, stumbling over several pairs of boots in so doing, Mr Pickwick crouched into a little recess in the wall, to wait for morning as philosophically as he might.

He was not destined, however, to undergo this additional trial of patience: for he had not been long ensconced in his present concealment when, to his unspeakable horror, a man bearing a light appeared at the end of the passage. His horror was suddenly converted into joy, however, when he recognised the form of his faithful attendant. It was indeed Mr Samuel Weller, who, after sitting up thus late in conversation with the Boots, who was sitting up for the mail, was now about to retire to rest.

"Sam," said Mr Pickwick, suddenly appearing before him, "where's my bedroom?"

Mr Weller stared at his master with the most emphatic surprise; and it was not until the question had been repeated three several times, that he turned round, and led the way to the long-sought apartment.

"Sam," said Mr Pickwick as he got into bed. "I have made one of the most extraordinary mistakes to-night, that ever were heard of."

"Wery likely, sir," replied Mr Weller drily.

"But of this I am determined, Sam," said Mr Pickwick; "that if I were to stop in this house for six months, I would never trust myself about it, alone, again."

"That's the wery prudentest resolution as you could come to, sir," replied Mr Weller. "You rayther want somebody to look arter you, sir, wen your judgment goes out a wisitin'."

"What do you mean by that, Sam?" said Mr Pickwick. He raised himself in bed, and extended his hand, as if he were about to say something more; but suddenly checking himself, turned round, and bade his valet "Good night."

"Good night, sir," replied Mr Weller. He paused when he got outside the door—shook his head—walked on—stopped—snuffed the candle—shook his head again—and finally proceeded slowly to his chamber, apparently buried in the profoundest meditation.

IV

The sequel to this adventure was equally amusing. Mr Magnus had come specially to Ipswich for the purpose of making a proposal of marriage to a certain lady,

then staying in the hotel, but had resolved not to press his attentions on the lady until the morning after his arrival.

Mr Pickwick and Mr Magnus met on the following morning, when Mr Magnus wished to introduce to the lady, Miss Witherfield, his "very particular friend," Mr Pickwick.

The lady was at the upper end of the room, and as Mr Pickwick bowed, he took his spectacles from his waistcoat pocket, and put them on, a process which he had no sooner gone through, than, uttering an exclamation of surprise, Mr Pickwick retreated several paces, and the lady, with a half-suppressed scream, hid her face in her hands, and dropped into a chair, whereupon Mr Peter Magnus was struck motionless on the spot, and gazed from one to the other, with a countenance expressive of the extremities of horror and surprise.

This certainly was, to all appearance, very unaccountable behaviour, but the fact was that Mr Pickwick no sooner put on his spectacles than he at once recognised in the future Mrs Magnus, the lady into whose room he had so unwarrantably intruded on the previous night; and the spectacles had no sooner crossed Mr Pickwick's nose than the lady at once identified the countenance which she had seen surrounded by all the horrors of a night-cap. So the lady screamed, and Mr Pickwick started.

A battle of words ensued, during which Mr Pickwick "looked encyclopaedias at Mr Peter Magnus," and Miss Witherfield, fearing violence, rushed off to the Mayor's house with the information that a duel was going to be fought.

"It is very distressing to me, sir, to give this information," said Miss Witherfield, "but I fear a duel is going to be fought here."

"Here, ma'am," said the Magistrate. "Where, ma'am?"

"In Ipswich."

"In Ipswich, ma'am—a duel in Ipswich," said the Magistrate, perfectly aghast at the notion. "Impossible, ma'am; nothing of the kind can be contemplated in this town, I am persuaded. Bless my soul, ma'am, are you aware of the activity of our local magistracy? Do you happen to have heard, ma'am, that I rushed into a prize-ring on the fourth of May last, attended by only sixty special constables; and, at the hazard of falling a sacrifice to the angry passions of an infuriated multitude, prohibited a puglistic contest between the Middlesex Dumpling, and the Suffolk Bantam? A duel in Ipswich, ma'am! I don't think—I do *not* think," said the Magistrate, reasoning with himself, "that any two men can have had the hardihood to plan such a breach of the peace in this town."

"My information is unfortunately but too correct," said the middle-aged lady, "I was present at the quarrel."

"It's a most extraordinary thing," said the astounded Magistrate.

With this, Mr Nupkins, the Mayor, called his "undersized footman," Muzzle, and sent the constable, Grummer, with a number of specials to arrest Mr Pickwick and Mr Tupman at the Great White Horse.

While these resolute and determined preparations for the conservation of the King's peace were pending,

Mr Pickwick and his friends, wholly unconscious of the mighty events in progress, had sat quietly down to dinner; and very talkative and companionable they all were; Mr Pickwick was in the very act of relating his adventure of the preceding night, to the great amusement of his followers, Mr Tupman especially, when the door opened, and a somewhat forbidding countenance peeped into the room. The eyes in the forbidding countenance looked very earnestly at Mr Pickwick for several seconds, and were to all appearance satisfied with their investigation, for the body to which the forbidding countenance belonged slowly brought itself into the apartment, and presented the form of an elderly individual in top-boots—not to keep the reader any longer in suspence, in short, the eyes were the wandering eyes of Mr Grummer, and the body was the body of the same gentleman.

Mr Grummer's mode of proceeding was professional, but peculiar. His first act was to bolt the door on the inside; his second, to polish his head and countenance very carefully with a cotton handkerchief; his third, to place his hat, with the cotton handkerchief in it, on the nearest chair; and his fourth, to produce from the breast-pocket of his coat a short truncheon surmounted by a brazen crown, with which he beckoned to Mr Pickwick with a grave and ghost-like air.

Mr Snodgrass was the first to break the astonished silence. He looked steadily at Mr Grummer for a brief space, and then said emphatically—"This is a private room, sir—a private room."

Mr Grummer shook his head, and replied—"No room's private to His Majesty when the street door's once passed. That's law. Some people maintains that an Englishman's house is his castle. That's gammon."

The Pickwickians gazed on each other, with wondering eyes.

"Which is Mr Tupman?" inquired Mr Grummer.

He had an intuitive perception of Mr Pickwick; he knew him at once.

"My name's Tupman," said that gentleman.

"My name's Law," said Mr Grummer.

"What?" said Mr Tupman.

"Law," replied Mr Grummer, "law, civil power, and exekative; them's my titles; here's my authority. Blank Tupman, blank Pickvick—against the peace of our sufferin Lord the King—stattit in that case made and purwided—and all regular. I apprehend you, Pickvick! Tupman—the aforesaid." . . .

Mr Pickwick and his followers rose as one man.

"What is the meaning of this atrocious intrusion upon my privacy?" said Mr Pickwick.

"Who dares apprehend me?" said Mr Tupman.

"What do you want here, scoundrels?" said Mr Snodgrass.

Mr Winkle said nothing, but he fixed his eyes on Grummer, and bestowed a look upon him, which, if he had any feeling, must have pierced his brain. As it was, however, it had no visible effect upon him whatever. . . .

But when Mr Pickwick had signified his readiness to bow to the laws of his country; and just when the waiters, and hostlers, and chamber-maids, and post-boys, who had anticipated a delightful commotion from his threatened obstinacy, began to turn away, disappointed and disgusted, a difficulty arose which had not been foreseen. With every sentiment of veneration for the constituted authorities, Mr Pickwick resolutely protested against making his appearance in the public streets, surrounded and guarded by the officers of justice, like a common criminal. . . . The dispute ran high, and the dilemma lasted long; and just as the executive were on the point of overcoming Mr Pickwick's objection to walking to the magistrate's, by the trite expedient of carrying him thither, it was recollected

that there stood in the inn yard, an old sedan chair, which, having been originally built for a gouty gentleman with funded property, would hold Mr Pickwick and Mr Tupman, at least as conveniently as a modern post-chaise. The chair was hired, and brought into the hall; Mr Pickwick and Mr Tupman squeezed themselves inside, and pulled down the blinds; a couple of chairmen were speedily found; and the procession started in grand order. The specials surrounded the body of the vehicle; Mr Grummer and Mr Dubbley marched triumphantly in front; Mr Snodgrass and Mr Winkle walked arm-in-arm behind; and the unsoaped of Ipswich brought up the rear. . . .

Many were the expressions of approval and admiration which greeted Mr Grummer, as he headed the cavalcade, staff in hand; loud and long were the shouts raised by the unsoaped; and amidst these united testimonials of public approbation, the procession moved slowly and majestically along.

V

The same morning we are introduced to the two Wellers taking their morning repast at the Great White Horse, "in a small room in the vicinity of the stable-yard," when the elder one remarked on the "wery good power o' suction" that his son possessed, and gave that amusing dissertation on the subject of "Widders."

When the two parted, the elder to his London coach, Mr Samuel Weller walked forth from the Great White Horse, and, bending his steps towards St. Clement's Church, endeavoured to dissipate his melancholy by strolling among its ancient precincts. He had loitered

MR PICKWICK'S PROGRESS THROUGH IPSWICH

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about for some time, when he found himself in a retired spot—a kind of court-yard of venerable appearance—which he discovered had no other outlet than the turning by which he had entered. He was about retracing his steps, when he was suddenly transfixed to the spot by a sudden appearance; and the mode and manner of this appearance, we now proceed to relate.

Mr Samuel Weller had been staring up at the old brick houses now and then, in his deep abstraction, bestowing a wink upon some healthy-looking servant girl as she drew up a blind, or threw open a bedroom window, when the green gate of a garden at the bottom of the yard opened, and, a man having emerged therefrom, closed the green gate very carefully after him and walked briskly towards the very spot where Mr Weller was standing. . . .

When the man had shut the green gate after him, he walked with a brisk pace up the court-yard; but he no sooner caught sight of Mr Weller than he faltered, and stopped, as if uncertain for the moment what course to adopt. As the green gate was closed behind him, and there was no other outlet but the one in front, however, he was not long in perceiving that he must pass Mr Samuel Weller to get away. He therefore resumed his brisk pace and advanced, staring straight before him. The most extraordinary thing about the man was that he was contorting his face into the most fearful and astonishing grimaces that ever were beheld. Nature's handiwork never was disguised with such extraordinary artificial carving as the man had overlaid his countenance with in one moment.

"Well!" said Mr Weller to himself, as the man approached. "This is wery odd. I could ha' swore it was him."

Up came the man, and his face became more frightfully distorted than ever, as he drew nearer.

"I could take my oath to that 'ere black hair, and

mulberry suit," said Mr Weller; " only I never see such a face as that, afore."

It was indeed Job Trotter, but for all his pink handkerchief and copious tears, compared with which, as Sam remarked, " Chelsea water works is nothin'," he was not to deceive Sam this time. That the house with the green gate had something to do with the fortunes of Job's master, Alfred Jingle, Sam Weller was confident, and, making an appointment with Job for him to visit the Great White Horse in the evening, Sam reported progress to his master, who on this particular morning, doubtless owing to the unsettled circumstances of the night before, did not partake of breakfast until a quarter to eleven. We know what happened ere that breakfast had begun, and the result of it was that Mr Pickwick was now enjoying a progress in a sedan chair through the streets of Ipswich.

The interval had given the opportunity to Sam to make a further inspection of the house with the green gate, in the lane by the Church, and happily he was on the spot just in the nick of time to be of assistance to his master.

Mr Weller, habited in his morning jacket with the black calico sleeves, was returning in a rather desponding state from an unsuccessful survey of the mysterious house with the green gate, when, raising his eyes, he beheld a crowd pouring down the street, surrounding an object which had very much the appearance of a sedan chair. Willing to divert his thoughts from the failure of his enterprise, he stepped aside to see the

crowd pass; and finding that they were cheering away, very much to their own satisfaction, forthwith began (by way of raising his spirits) to cheer too, with all his might and main.

However, hearing "the magic word 'Pickwick'" uttered by some of the crowd, he attempted to release his master, but was overwhelmed by numbers and taken prisoner.

Mr Pickwick's indignation during the whole of this proceeding was beyond all bounds. He could just see Sam upsetting the specials, and flying about in every direction, and that was all he could see, for the sedan doors wouldn't open, and the blinds wouldn't pull up. At length, with the assistance of Mr Tupman, he managed to push open the roof; and mounting on the seat, and steadying himself as well as he could, by placing his hand on that gentleman's shoulder, Mr Pickwick proceeded to address the multitude; to dwell upon the unjustifiable manner in which he had been treated; and to call upon them to take notice that his servant had been first assaulted. And in this order they reached the Magistrate's house; the chairmen trotting, the prisoners following, Mr Pickwick oratorising, and the crowd shouting. . . .

Mr Weller's anger quickly gave way to curiosity when the procession turned down the identical courtyard in which he had met with the runaway Job Trotter: and curiosity was exchanged for a feeling of the most gleeful astonishment when the all-important Mr Grummer, commanding the sedan-bearers to halt, advanced with dignified and portentous steps to the very green gate from which Job Trotter had emerged, and gave a mighty pull at the bell-handle which hung at the side thereof.

The house of Mr Nupkin can be visualised—if not actually identified—in one or other of the houses in or near to St. Clement's Lane. It has a particular attraction to us, not so much as the residence of the Mayor, but as the place where Sam Weller first met "the pretty housemaid" and had "the first passage" of his "first love." To her it was, at a later date, that he addressed his famous valentine.

VI

The proceedings before the Magistrate Nupkins were somewhat protracted, but received a sudden check when Mr Pickwick, prompted by Sam and the knowledge obtained regarding Jingle, asked for a private interview with the Magistrate.

"I will come to the point at once, sir," said Mr Pickwick; "it affects yourself, and your credit, materially. I have every reason to believe, sir, that you are harbouring in your house, a gross impostor!" . . .

"In one word, sir," said Mr Pickwick, "is my servant right in suspecting that a certain Captain Fitz-Marshall is in the habit of visiting here? Because," added Mr Pickwick, as he saw that Mr Nupkins was about to offer a very indignant interruption, "because, if he be, I know that person to be a——"

"Hush, hush," said Mr Nupkins, closing the door. "Know him to be what, sir?"

"An unprincipled adventurer—a dishonourable character—a man who preys upon society, and makes easily-deceived people his dupes, sir; his absurd, his foolish,

his wretched dupes, sir," said the excited Mr Pickwick.

"Dear me," said Mr Nupkins, colouring up very red, and altering his whole manner directly. "Dear me, Mr—"

"Pickvick," said Sam.

"Pickwick," said the Magistrate, "dear me, Mr Pickwick—pray take a seat—you cannot mean this? Captain Fitz-Marshall!"

"Don't call him a cap'en," said Sam, "nor Fitz-Marshall neither; he ain't neither one nor t'other. He's a strolling actor, he is, and his name's Jingle; and if ever there was a wolf in a mulberry suit, that ere Job Trotter's him."

"It is very true, sir," said Mr Pickwick, replying to the Magistrate's look of amazement; "my only business in this town, is to expose the person of whom we now speak."

And Mr Pickwick proceeded to pour into the horror-stricken ear of Mr Nupkins, an abridged account of all Mr Jingle's atrocities. He related how he had first met him, how he had eloped with Miss Wardle, how he had cheerfully resigned the lady for a pecuniary consideration, how he had entrapped him into a lady's boarding-school at midnight, and how he (Mr Pickwick) now felt it his duty to expose his assumption of his present name and rank.

As the narrative proceeded, all the warm blood in the body of Mr Nupkins tingled up into the very tips of his ears. He had picked up the Captain at a neighbouring race-course. Charmed with his long list of aristocratic acquaintance, his extensive travel, and his fashionable demeanour, Mrs Nupkins and Miss Nupkins had exhibited Captain Fitz-Marshall, and quoted Captain Fitz-Marshall, and hurled Captain Fitz-Marshall at the devoted heads of their select circle of acquaintance, until their bosom friends, Mrs Porkenham and the Miss

Porkenhams, and Mr Sidney Porkenham, were ready to burst with jealousy and despair. And now, to hear after all, that he was a needy adventurer, a strolling player, and if not a swindler, something so very like it, that it was hard to tell the difference! Heavens! what would the Porkenhams say!

Consequently the fines were remitted, and Mr Pickwick and his friends were introduced to the ladies, and invited to stay to dinner: during which time, under the guidance of Muzzle, Sam went downstairs to dine with the cook and the pretty housemaid, Mary.

. . . . . .

Later in the day, Sam entered the parlour upstairs to witness Jingle receive his congé at the hands of the Ipswich Magistrate:

It was an impressive tableau. Alfred Jingle, Esquire, alias Captain Fitz-Marshall, was standing near the door with his hat in his hand, and a smile on his face, wholly unmoved by his very unpleasant situation. Confronting him, stood Mr Pickwick, who had evidently been inculcating some high moral lesson; for his left hand was beneath his coat tail, and his right extended in air, as was his wont when delivering himself of an impressive address. At a little distance, stood Mr Tupman with indignant countenance, carefully held back by his two younger friends; at the further end of the room were Mr Nupkins, Mrs Nupkins, and Miss Nupkins, gloomily grand, and savagely vexed.

"What prevents me," said Mr Nupkins, with magis-

terial dignity, as Job was brought in: "what prevents me from detaining these men as rogues and impostors? It is a foolish mercy. What prevents me?"

"Pride, old fellow, pride," replied Jingle, quite at his ease. "Wouldn't do—no go—caught a captain, eh?—ha! ha! very good—husband for daughter—biter bit—make it public—not for worlds—look stupid—very!" . . .

"Mr Nupkins," said the elder lady, "this is not a fit conversation for the servants to overhear. Let these wretches be removed."

"Certainly, my dear," said Mr Nupkins. "Muzzle!"

"Your worship."

"Open the front door."

"Yes, your worship."

"Leave the house!" said Mr Nupkins, waving his hand emphatically.

Jingle smiled, and moved towards the door.

"Stay!" said Mr Pickwick.

Jingle stopped.

"I might," said Mr Pickwick, "have taken a much greater revenge for the treatment I have experienced at your hands, and that of your hypocritical friend there."

Job Trotter bowed with great politeness, and laid his hand upon his heart.

"I say," said Mr Pickwick, growing gradually angry, "that I might have taken a greater revenge, but I content myself with exposing you, which I consider a duty I owe to society. This is a leniency, sir, which I hope you will remember."

When Mr Pickwick arrived at this point, Job Trotter, with facetious gravity applied his hand to his ear, as if desirous not to lose a syllable he uttered.

"And I have only to add, sir," said Mr Pickwick, now thoroughly angry, "that I consider you a rascal, and a—a ruffian—and—and worse than any man I ever

saw, or heard of, except that pious and sanctified vagabond in the mulberry livery."

"Ha! ha!" said Jingle, "good fellow, Pickwick—fine heart—stout old boy—but must *not* be passionate—bad thing, very—bye, bye—see you again some day—keep up your spirits—now, Job—trot!"

With these words, Mr Jingle stuck on his hat in the old fashion, and strode out of the room. Job Trotter paused, looked round, smiled, and then with a bow of mock solemnity to Mr Pickwick, and a wink to Mr Weller, the audacious slyness of which baffles all description, followed the footsteps of his hopeful master.

"Sam," said Mr Pickwick, as Mr Weller was following.

"Sir."

"Stay here."

Mr Weller seemed uncertain.

"Stay here," repeated Mr Pickwick.

"Mayn't I polish that ere Job off in the front garden?" said Mr Weller.

"Certainly not," replied Mr Pickwick.

"Mayn't I kick him out o' the gate, sir?" said Mr Weller.

"Not on any account," replied his master.

For the first time since his engagement, Mr Weller looked, for a moment, discontented and unhappy. But his countenance immediately cleared up; for the wily Mr Muzzle, by concealing himself behind the street door, and rushing violently out, at the right instant, contrived with great dexterity to overturn both Mr Jingle and his attendant, down the flight of steps, into the American aloe tubs that stood beneath.

"Having discharged my duty, sir," said Mr Pickwick to Mr Nupkins, "I will, with my friends, bid you farewell. While we thank you for such hospitality as we have received, permit me to assure you, in our joint names, that we should not have accepted it, or have

consented to extricate ourselves in this way from our previous dilemma, had we not been impelled by a strong sense of duty. We return to London to-morrow."

. . . . . .

Having accomplished the main end and object of his journey by the exposure of Jingle, Mr Pickwick resolved on immediately returning to London, with the view of becoming acquainted with the proceedings which had been taken against him, in the meantime, by Messrs Dodson and Fogg. Acting upon this resolution with all the energy and decision of his character, he mounted to the back seat of the first coach, which left Ipswich on the morning after the memorable occurrences detailed at length in the two preceding chapters; and accompanied by his three friends and Mr Samuel Weller, arrived in the metropolis in perfect health and safety, the same evening.

Here the friends for a short time separated. Messrs Tupman, Winkle, and Snodgrass repaired to their several homes to make such preparations as might be requisite for their forthcoming visit to Dingley Dell; and Mr Pickwick and Sam took up their present abode in very good, old-fashioned, and comfortable quarters, to wit, the George and Vulture Tavern and Hotel, George Yard, Lombard Street.

. . . . . .

A curious inconsistency in chronology might here be mentioned. The return to London from Ipswich was made in the early days of September, probably the 7th. After dinner at the George and Vulture, on the same evening Mr Pickwick instructed Sam to go to Goswell Street to pay the rent. "The quarter is not due till

Christmas, but you may pay it and have done with it." At the Trial, this is referred to as taking place "one night in November." In addition, on September 7th, it is hardly possible that the quarter's rent due Michaelmas would have been paid! So there was undoubtedly confusion in the mind of Dickens as to the exact periods.

THE FOURTH PILGRIMAGE

THE FOURTH PILGRIMAGE

The Christmas Journey to Dingley Dell

I

THE long promised Christmas visit of Mr Pickwick and his three friends, to Manor Farm, Dingley Dell, for the marriage of Bella Wardle to Mr Trundle, was made on the "twenty-second day of December," 1827 (a Saturday); and a particularly vivid picture of coach travelling is given by Dickens in the description of the journey. Their starting place is not mentioned: it was probably at the White Hart in the Borough that we are introduced to—

Mr Pickwick and his friends waiting in the cold, on the outside of the Muggleton coach, which they have just attained, well wrapped up in great coat, shawls, and comforters. The portmanteaus and carpet-bags have been stowed away, and Mr Weller and the guard are endeavouring to insinuate into the fore-boot a huge cod-fish several sizes too large for it, which is snugly packed up, in a long brown basket, with a layer of straw over the top, and which has been left to the last, in order that he may repose in safety on the half-dozen barrels of real native oysters, all the property of Mr Pickwick, which have been arranged in regular order,

at the bottom of the receptacle. The interest displayed in Mr Pickwick's countenance is most intense, as Mr Weller and the guard try to squeeze the cod-fish into the boot, first head first, and then tail first, and then top upwards, and then bottom upwards, and then sideways, and then long-ways, all of which artifices the implacable cod-fish sturdily resists, until the guard accidentally hits him in the very middle of the basket, whereupon he suddenly disappears into the boot, and with him, the head and shoulders of the guard himself, who, not calculating upon so sudden a cessation of the passive resistance of the cod-fish, experiences a very unexpected shock, to the unsmotherable delight of all the porters and by-standers. Upon this, Mr Pickwick smiles with great good humour, and drawing a shilling from his waistcoat pocket, begs the guard, as he picks himself out of the boot, to drink his health in a glass of hot brandy and water, at which, the guard smiles too, and Messrs Snodgrass, Winkle, and Tupman all smile in company. The guard and Mr Weller disappear for five minutes, most probably to get the hot brandy and water, for they smell very strongly of it, when they return; the coachman mounts to the box, Mr Weller jumps up behind, the Pickwickians pull their coats round their legs, and their shawls over their noses; the helpers pull the horse-cloths off, the coachman shouts out a cheery "All right," and away they go.

They have rumbled through the streets, and jolted over the stones, and at length reach the wide and open country. The wheels skim over the hard and frosty ground; and the horses, bursting into a canter at a smart crack of the whip, step along the road as if the load behind them, coach, passengers, cod-fish, oyster barrels, and all: were but a feather at their heels. They have descended a gentle slope, and enter upon a level, as compact and dry as a solid block of marble, two miles long. Another crack of the whip, and on they

speed, at a smart gallop: the horses tossing their heads and rattling the harness, as if in exhilaration at the rapidity of the motion: while the coachman, holding whip and reins in one hand, takes off his hat with the other, and resting it on his knees, pulls out his handkerchief, and wipes his forehead: partly because he has a habit of doing it, and partly because it's as well to show the passangers how cool he is, and what an easy thing it is to drive four-in-hand, when you have had as much practice as he has. Having done this very leisurely (otherwise the effect would be materially impaired), he replaces his handkerchief, pulls on his hat, adjusts his gloves, squares his elbows, cracks the whip again, and on they speed, more merrily than before.

A few small houses, scattered on either side of the road, betoken the entrance to some town or village. The lively notes of the guard's key-bugle vibrate in the clear cold air, and wake up the old gentleman inside, who, carefully letting down the window-sash half-way, and standing sentry over the air, takes a short peep out, and then carefully pulling it up again, informs the other inside that they're going to change directly; on which the other inside wakes himself up and determines to postpone his next nap until after the stoppage. Again the bugle sounds lustily forth, and rouses the cottager's wife and children, who peep out at the house-door, and watch the coach till it turns the corner, when they once more crouch round the blazing fire, and throw on another log of wood against father comes home; while father himself, a full mile off, has just exchanged a friendly nod with the coachman, and turned round to take a good long stare at the vehicle as it whirls away.

And now the bugle plays a lively air as the coach rattles through the ill-paved streets of a country town; and the coachman, undoing the buckle which keeps his ribands together, prepares to throw them off the moment he stops. Mr Pickwick emerges from his coat

collar, and looks about him with great curiosity; perceiving which, the coachman informs Mr Pickwick of the name of the town, and tells him it was market-day yesterday, both of which pieces of information Mr Pickwick retails to his fellow-passengers; whereupon they emerge from their coat collars too, and look about them also. Mr Winkle, who sits at the extreme edge, with one leg dangling in the air, is nearly precipitated into the street, as the coach twists round the sharp corner by the cheesemonger's shop, and turns into the market-place; and before Mr Snodgrass, who sits next to him, has recovered from his alarm, they pull up at the inn yard, where the fresh horses, with cloths on, are already waiting. The coachman throws down the reins and gets down himself, and the other outside passengers drop down also: except those who have no great confidence in their ability to get up again: and they remain where they are, and stamp their feet against the coach to warm them—looking, with longing eyes and red noses, at the bright fire in the inn bar, and the sprigs of holly with red berries which ornament the window.

But the guard has delivered at the corn-dealer's shop the brown paper packet he took out of the little pouch which hangs over his shoulder by a leathern strap, and has seen the horses carefully put to, and has thrown on the pavement the saddle which was brought from London on the coach-roof, and has assisted in the conference between the coachman and the hostler about the grey mare that hurt her off foreleg last Tuesday, and he and Mr Weller are all right behind, and the coachman is all right in front, and the old gentleman inside, who has kept the window down full two inches all this time, has pulled it up again, and the cloths are off, and they are all ready for starting, except the "two stout gentlemen," whom the coachman inquires after with some impatience. Hereupon the coachman, and the guard, and

Sam Weller, and Mr Winkle, and Mr Snodgrass, and all the hostlers, and every one of the idlers, who are more in number than all the others put together, shout for the missing gentlemen as loud as they can bawl. A distant response is heard from the yard, and Mr Pickwick and Mr Tupman come running down it, quite out of breath, for they have been having a glass of ale a-piece, and Mr Pickwick's fingers are so cold that he has been full five minutes before he could find the sixpence to pay for it. The coachman shouts an admonitory "Now, then, gen'lm'n," the guard re-echoes it—the old gentleman inside thinks it a very extraordinary thing that people *will* get down when they know there isn't time for it—Mr Pickwick struggles up on one side, Mr Tupman on the other, Mr Winkle cries "All right," and off they start. Shawls are pulled up, coat collars are re-adjusted, the pavement ceases, the houses disappear; and they are once again dashing along the open road, with the fresh clear air blowing in their faces, and gladdening their very hearts within them.

Such was the progress of Mr Pickwick and his friends by the Muggleton Telegraph, on their way to Dingley Dell; and at three o'clock that afternoon they all stood, high and dry, safe and sound, hale and hearty, upon the steps of the Blue Lion, having taken on the road quite enough of ale and brandy to enable them to bid defiance to the frost that was binding up the earth in its iron fetters, and weaving its beautiful net-work upon the trees and hedges.

They were a happy party that night, we are told: and rather sedate, perhaps, in preparation for the wedding on the morrow. Sound sleep followed, and then the wedding itself, the breakfast, the speeches, "a five-and-twenty mile walk . . . to get rid of the effects of the wine," and then "the dinner . . . as

hearty an affair as the breakfast "—and then the ball, in the best sitting-room, "a good long dark-panelled room with a high chimney-piece": and all this was followed by a "glorious supper downstairs": so no wonder "Mr Pickwick awoke late the next morning," Christmas Eve, when the family had "games in the kitchen . . . according to annual custom . . . observed by old Wardle's forefathers from time immemorial."

Christmas Day saw the advent of what Sam Weller called "a couple o' sawbones," who were to play conspicuous parts in the later history of the Pickwickians, Benjamin Allen and Bob Sawyer, and witnessed that famous adventure on the ice.

II

"Now," said Wardle, after a substantial lunch, with the agreeable items of strong beer and cherry-brandy, had been done ample justice to, "what say to an hour on the ice? We shall have plenty of time."

"Capital!" said Mr Benjamin Allen.

"Prime!" ejaculated Mr Bob Sawyer.

"You skate, of course, Winkle?" said Wardle.

"Ye-yes; oh, yes," replied Mr Winkle. "I—I—am *rather* out of practice."

"Oh, *do* skate, Mr Winkle," said Arabella. "I like to see it so much."

"Oh, it is *so* graceful," said another young lady.

A third young lady said it was elegant, and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was "swan-like."

"I should be very happy, I'm sure," said Mr Winkle, reddening; "but I have no skates."

CHRISTMAS EVE AT DINGLEY DELL

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This objection was at once overruled. Trundle had a couple of pair, and the fat boy announced that there were half-a-dozen more downstairs: whereat Mr Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Old Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice; and the fat boy and Mr Weller having shovelled and swept away the snow which had fallen on it during the night, Mr Bob Sawyer adjusted his skates with a dexterity which to Mr Winkle was perfectly marvellous, and described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eight, and inscribed upon the ice, without once stopping for breath, a great many other pleasant and astonishing devices, to the excessive satisfaction of Mr Pickwick, Mr Tupman, and the ladies: which reached a pitch of positive enthusiasm when old Wardle and Benjamin Allen, assisted by the aforesaid Bob Sawyer, performed some mystic evolutions which they called a reel.

All this time, Mr Winkle, with his face and hands blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his feet, and putting his skates on, with the points behind, and getting the straps into a very complicated and entangled state, with the assistance of Mr Snodgrass, who knew rather less about skates than a Hindoo. At length, however, with the assistance of Mr Weller, the unfortunate skates were firmly screwed and buckled on, and Mr Winkle was raised to his feet.

"Now, then, sir," said Sam, in an encouraging tone; "off vith you, and show 'em how to do it."

"Stop, Sam, stop!" said Mr Winkle, trembling violently, and clutching hold of Sam's arms with the grasp of a drowning man. "How slippery it is, Sam!"

"Not an uncommon thing upon ice, sir," replied Mr Weller. "Hold up, sir!"

This last observation of Mr Weller's bore reference to a demonstration Mr Winkle made at the instant, of

a frantic desire to throw his feet in the air, and dash the back of his head on the ice.

"These—these—are very awkward skates; ain't they, Sam?" inquired Mr Winkle, staggering.

"I'm afeerd there's a orkard gen'lm'n in 'em, sir," replied Sam.

"Now, Winkle," cried Mr Pickwick, quite unconscious that there was anything the matter. "Come; the ladies are all anxiety."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr Winkle, with a ghastly smile. "I'm coming."

"Just a goin' to begin," said Sam, endeavouring to disengage himself. "Now, sir, start off."

"Stop an instant, Sam," gasped Mr Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr Weller. "I find I've got a couple of coats at home, that I don't want, Sam. You may have them, Sam."

"Thank'ee, sir," replied Mr Weller.

"Never mind touching your hat, Sam," said Mr Winkle, hastily, "You needn't take your hand away to do that. I meant to have given you five shillings this morning for a Christmas-box, Sam. I'll give it you this afternoon, Sam."

"You're wery good, sir," replied Mr Weller.

"Just hold me at first, Sam; will you?" said Mr Winkle. "There—that's right. I shall soon get in the way of it, Sam. Not too fast, Sam; not too fast."

Mr Winkle, stooping forward, with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr Weller, in a very singular and un-swan-like manner, when Mr Pickwick most innocently shouted from the opposite bank—

"Sam!"

"Sir?" said Mr Weller.

"Here. I want you."

"Let go, sir," said Sam. "Don't you hear the governor a callin'? Let go, sir."

COB TREE, SANDLING

' " Welcome to Manor Farm! " . . . Old Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice.'

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With a violent effort, Mr Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agonized Pickwickian; and, in so doing, administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr Winkle. With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have insured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into the centre of the reel, at the very moment when Mr Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they both fell heavily down. Mr Pickwick ran to the spot. Bob Sawyer had risen to his feet, but Mr Winkle was far too wise to do anything of the kind in skates. He was seated on the ice, making spasmodic efforts to smile; but anguish was depicted on every lineament of his countenance.

"Are you hurt?" inquired Mr Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety.

"Not much," said Mr Winkle, rubbing his back very hard.

"I wish you'd let me bleed you," said Mr Benjamin with great eagerness.

"No, thank you," replied Mr Winkle hurriedly.

"I really think you had better," said Allen.

"Thank you," replied Mr Winkle; "I'd rather not."

"What do *you* think, Mr Pickwick?" inquired Bob Sawyer.

Mr Pickwick was excited and indignant. He beckoned to Mr Weller, and said in a stern voice, "Take his skates off."

"No; but really I had scarcely begun," remonstrated Mr Winkle.

"Take his skates off," repeated Mr Pickwick firmly.

The command was not to be resisted. Mr Winkle allowed Sam to obey it, in silence.

"Lift him up," said Mr Pickwick. Sam assisted him to rise.

Mr Pickwick retired a few paces apart from the by-standers; and, beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered in a low, but distinct and emphatic tone, these remarkable words:

"You're a humbug, sir."

"A what!" said Mr Winkle, starting.

"A humbug, sir. I will speak plainer, if you wish it. An impostor, sir."

With these words, Mr Pickwick turned slowly on his heel, and rejoined his friends.

While Mr Pickwick was delivering himself of the sentiment just recorded, Mr Weller and the fat boy, having by their joint endeavours cut out a slide, were exercising themselves thereupon, in a very masterly and brilliant manner. Sam Weller, in particular, was displaying that beautiful feat of fancy sliding which is currently denominated "knocking at the cobbler's door," and which is achieved by skimming over the ice on one foot, and occasionally giving a two-penny post-man's knock upon it with the other. It was a good long slide, and there was something in the motion which Mr Pickwick, who was very cold with standing still, could not help envying.

"It looks a nice warm exercise that, doesn't it?" he inquired of Wardle, when that gentleman was thoroughly out of breath, by reason of the indefatigable manner in which he had converted his legs into a pair of compasses, and drawn complicated problems on the ice.

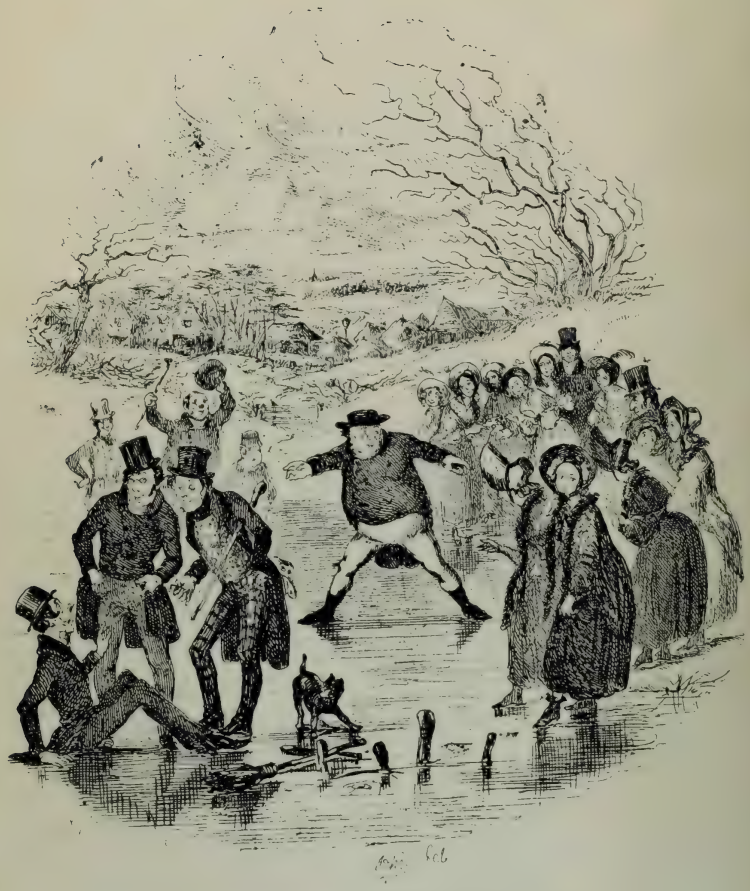
"Ah, it does indeed," replied Wardle. "Do you slide?"

"I used to do so, on the gutters, when I was a boy," replied Mr Pickwick.

"Try it now," said Wardle.

"Oh do, please, Mr Pickwick!" cried all the ladies.

"I should be very happy to afford you any amuse-



THE SKATING PARTY AT DINGLEY DELL

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ment," replied Mr Pickwick, " but I haven't done such a thing these thirty years."

" Pooh ! pooh ! Nonsense ! " said Wardle, dragging off his skates with the impetuosity which characterised all his proceedings. " Here; I'll keep you company; come along." And away went the good-tempered old fellow down the slide, with a rapidity which came very close upon Mr Weller, and beat the fat boy all to nothing.

Mr Pickwick paused, considered, pulled off his gloves and put them in his hat: took two or three short runs, baulked himself as often, and at last took another run, and went slowly and gravely down the slide, with his feet about a yard and a quarter apart, amidst the gratified shouts of all the spectators.

" Keep the pot a bilin' sir ! " said Sam; and down went Wardle again, and then Mr Pickwick, and then Sam, and then Mr Winkle, and then Mr Bob Sawyer, and then the fat boy, and then Mr Snodgrass, following closely upon each other's heels, and running after each other with as much eagerness as if all their future prospects in life depended on their expedition. . . . .

The sport was at its height, the sliding was at the quickest, the laughter was at the loudest, when a sharp smart crack was heard. There was a quick rush towards the bank, a wild scream from the ladies, and a shout from Mr Tupman. A large mass of ice disappeared; the water bubbled up over it; Mr Pickwick's hat, gloves, and handkerchief were floating on the surface; and this was all of Mr Pickwick that anybody could see.

Dismay and anguish were depicted on every countenance, the males turned pale, and the females fainted, Mr Snodgrass and Mr Winkle grasped each other by the hand, and gazed at the spot where their leader had gone down, with frenzied eagerness: while Mr Tupman, by way of rendering the promptest assistance, and at the same time conveying to any persons who might be

within hearing, the clearest possible notion of the catastrophe, ran off across the country at his utmost speed, screaming "Fire!" with all his might.

It was at this moment, when old Wardle and Sam Weller were approaching the hole with cautious steps, and Mr Benjamin Allen was holding a hurried consultation with Mr Bob Sawyer, on the advisability of bleeding the company generally, as an improving little bit of professional practice—it was at this very moment that a face, head, and shoulders emerged from beneath the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr Pickwick.

"Keep yourself up for an instant—for only one instant!" bawled Mr Snodgrass.

"Yes, do; let me implore you—for my sake!" roared Mr Winkle, deeply affected. The adjuration was rather unnecessary; the probability being, that if Mr Pickwick had declined to keep himself up for anybody else's sake, it would have occurred to him that he might as well do so for his own.

"Do you feel the bottom there, old fellow?" said Wardle.

"Yes, certainly," replied Mr Pickwick, wringing the water from his head and face, and gasping for breath. "I fell upon my back. I couldn't get on my feet at first." . . .

After a vast quantity of splashing, and cracking, and struggling, Mr Pickwick was at length fairly extricated from his unpleasant position, and once more stood on dry land.

"Oh, he'll catch his death of cold," said Emily.

"Dear old thing!" said Arabella. "Let me wrap this shawl round you, Mr Pickwick."

"Ah, that's the best thing you can do," said Wardle; "and when you've got it on, run home as fast as your legs can carry you, and jump into bed directly."

A dozen shawls were offered on the instant; and three

or four of the thickest having been selected, Mr Pickwick was wrapped up, and started off, under the guidance of Mr Weller; presenting the singular phenomenon of an elderly gentleman dripping wet, and without a hat, with his arms bound down to his sides, skimming over the ground without any clearly defined purpose, at the rate of six good English miles an hour. . . .

Mr Pickwick paused not an instant until he was snug in bed. Sam Weller lighted a blazing fire in the room, and took up his dinner; a bowl of punch was carried up afterwards, and a grand carouse held in honour of his safety. Old Wardle would not hear of his rising, so they made the bed the chair, and Mr Pickwick presided. A second and a third bowl were ordered in; and when Mr Pickwick awoke next morning there was not a symptom of rheumatism about him, which proves, as Mr Bob Sawyer very justly observed, that there is nothing like hot punch in such cases, and that if ever hot punch did fail to act as a preventive, it was merely because the patient fell into the vulgar error of not taking enough of it.

THE FIFTH PILGRIMAGE

THE ROMAN BATH, BATH

'"*Where shall we go next? . . . If you leave me to suggest our destination, I say Bath. I think none of us have ever been there.*" . . . *The proposition . . . was carried unanimously.*'

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THE FIFTH PILGRIMAGE

To Bath and Bristol

I

MR PICKWICK, having decided that he would pay "Not one halfpenny" of the costs of the case which the wily Mrs Bardell, at the instigation of Dodson & Fogg, had brought against him, finally answered his own question, "where shall we go next," by saying Bath. "I think none of us have ever been there," he added: and, as nobody had, to Bath they accordingly decided to go, and "Sam was at once despatched to the White Horse Cellar, to take five places by the half-past seven o'clock coach, next morning." And the next morning—a damp and unpropitious one, we are told—found them at the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, with twenty minutes to spare, so they repaired to the travellers' room, "the last resource of human dejection."

The travellers' room at the White Horse Cellar is, of course, uncomfortable; it would be no travellers' room if it were not. It is the right-hand parlour, into which an aspiring kitchen fireplace appears to have walked,

accompanied by a rebellious poker, tongs, and shovel. It is divided into boxes, for the solitary confinement of travellers, and is furnished with a clock, a looking-glass, and a live waiter: which latter article is kept in a small kennel for washing glasses, in a corner of the apartment.

Here they made the acquaintance of the "stern-eyed man . . . with a good deal of black hair . . . and large black whiskers," Mr Dowler, who was "going to Bath on pleasure" with his wife, of whom he was very jealous.

The couple became their travelling companions and helped to enliven the Bath adventures, in the same manner as Jingle had the Kentish scenes, and Peter Magnus the Ipswich incidents.

At the commencement of the journey we are told of a remarkable coincidence—

Mr Winkle had got inside, and Mr Pickwick was preparing to follow him, when Sam Weller came up to his master, and, whispering in his ear, begged to speak to him, with an air of the deepest mystery.

"Well, Sam," said Mr Pickwick, "what's the matter now?"

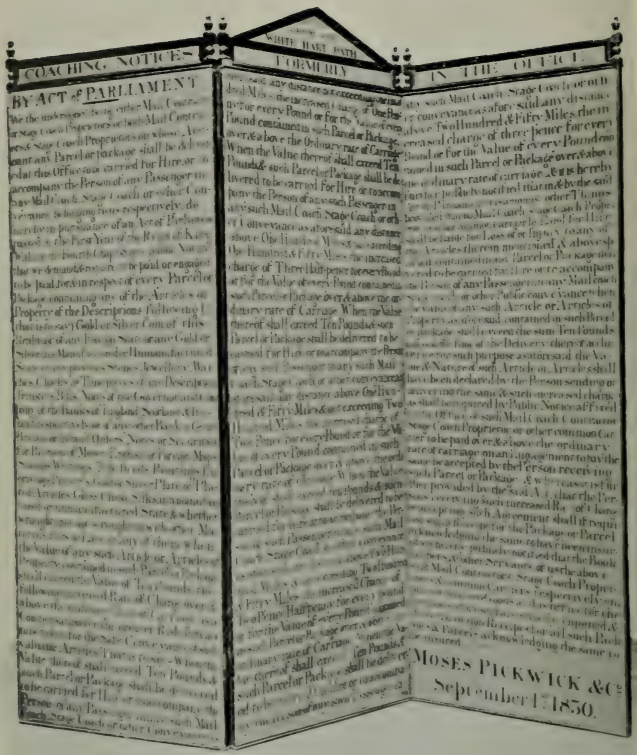
"Here's rayther a rum go, sir," replied Sam.

"What?" inquired Mr Pickwick.

"This here, sir," rejoined Sam, "I'm wery much afeerd, sir, that the properiator o' this here coach is a playin' some imperence vith us."

"How is that, Sam?" said Mr Pickwick; "aren't the names down on the way-bill?"

"The names is not only down on the vay-bill, sir," replied Sam, "but they've painted vun on 'em up, on the door o' the coach." As Sam spoke, he pointed to



"THE MAGIC NAME OF PICKWICK"
COACHING NOTICES FORMERLY IN THE OFFICE OF
MOSES PICKWICK & CO., BATH

[To face p. 167.

that part of the coach door on which the proprietor's name usually appears; and there sure enough, in gilt letters of a goodly size, was the magic name of PICKWICK!

"Dear me," exclaimed Mr Pickwick, quite staggered by the coincidence; "what a very extraordinary thing!"

"Yes, but that ain't all," said Sam, again directing his master's attention to the coach door; "not content vith writin' up Pickwick, they puts 'Moses' afore it, vich I call addin' insult to injury, as the parrot said ven they not only took him from his native land, but made him talk the English langvidge artervards."

"It's odd enough, certainly, Sam," said Mr Pickwick; "but if we stand talking here, we shall lose our places."

"Wot, ain't nothin' to be done in consequence, sir?" exclaimed Sam, perfectly aghast at the coolness with which Mr Pickwick prepared to ensconce himself inside.

"Done!" said Mr Pickwick. "What should be done?"

"Ain't nobody to be whopped for takin' this here liberty, sir?" said Mr Weller, who had expected that at least he would have been commissioned to challenge the guard and coachman to a pugilistic encounter on the spot.

"Certainly not," replied Mr Pickwick eagerly; "not on any account. Jump up to your seat directly."

"I'm wery much afeerd," muttered Sam to himself, as he turned away, "that somethin' queer's come over the governor, or he'd never ha' stood this so quiet. I hope that 'ere trial hasn't broke his spirit, but it looks bad, wery bad." Mr Weller shook his head gravely; and it is worthy of remark, as an illustration of the manner in which he took this circumstance to heart, that he did not speak another word until the coach reached the Kensington turnpike. Which was so long

a time for him to remain taciturn, that the fact may be considered wholly unprecedented.

The use of the name of Pickwick was neither such a liberty nor such a curiosity as Sam supposed it to be. As a matter of fact, a Moses Pickwick was the proprietor of the London and Bath service of coaches, and it was doubtless from him that Dickens took the name of his hero. There is preserved in Bath a screen known as The Pickwickian Screen, which formerly stood in the Bath coach office, and which contains particulars of the regulations under which goods and passengers were carried; and it is signed at the foot, Moses Pickwick.

The Bath Road is perhaps the most famous coaching road in the Kingdom, and the coaches in those days took twelve hours to accomplish its 106 odd miles; but, strange to say, we have no mention of any places en route, save Kensington, in the above paragraph. The beauties of Maidenhead, Reading, Newbury, and Marlborough, evidently did not concern Mr Pickwick, neither did the village which bears his name, and which is situated nine miles this side of Bath. Perhaps Sam was afraid to venture on the topic again, or maybe Dickens was ignorant of the fact that there was a village which had given its name to the grandfather of the coach proprietor.

But if Dickens does not give us any particulars of the route to Bath, he certainly discourses in a very interesting manner on the behaviour of stage-coach passengers in general. Much of this was his own observation, for although he was only twenty-four when

THE VILLAGE OF PICKWICK, NEAR BATH

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Pickwick was written, he had, in the previous year made more than one visit to Bath in the course of his duties as Reporter to the " Morning Chronicle."

The outsides did as outsides always do. They were very cheerful and talkative at the beginning of every stage, and very dismal and sleepy in the middle, and very bright and wakeful again towards the end. There was one young gentleman in an Indiarubber cloak, who smoked cigars all day; and there was another young gentleman in a parody upon a great coat, who lighted a good many, and, feeling obviously unsettled after the second whiff, threw them away when he thought nobody was looking at him. There was a third young man on the box who wished to be learned in cattle, and an old one behind, who was familiar with farming. There was a constant succession of Christian names in smock frocks and white coats, who were invited to have a " lift " by the guard, and who knew every horse and hostler on the road and off it; and there was a dinner which would have been cheap at half-a-crown a mouth, if any moderate number of mouths could have eaten it in the time.

II

At the time when *The Pickwick Papers* was written, Dickens had very vivid personal recollections of the Bath Road.

The interval of two years between his first published sketch, *Mr Minns and His Cousin*, as it is now called, and the beginning of *Pickwick*, saw Dickens making

rapid strides in his profession as reporter for the "Morning Chronicle."

"To the wholesome training of severe newspaper work when I was a very young man, I constantly refer my first successes," he said on one occasion; and to his experiences, then, we owe the graphic pictures he has given us in *The Pickwick Papers* and elsewhere, of travelling by road, and the descriptions of the old inns and other places he visited during the elections of 1835. Now was opened up to him a wide and varied range of experience, which his genial youthful observation made quaint and humorous.

In 1845 he made a confession of these days, in a letter to Forster, in which he said:

"There never was anybody connected with newspapers, who in the same space of time had so much express and post-chaise experience as I. And what gentlemen they were to serve in such things at the old 'Morning Chronicle'! Great or small, it did not matter. I have had to charge for half-a-dozen breakdowns in half-a-dozen times as many miles. I have had to charge for the damage of a great-coat from the drippings of a blazing wax-candle, in writing through the smallest hours of the night in a swift-flying carriage and pair. I have had to charge for all sorts of breakages fifty times in a journey without question, such being the ordinary results of the pace which we went at. I have charged for broken hats, broken luggage, broken chaises, broken harness—everything but a broken head, which is the only thing they would have grumbled to pay for."

Forster quotes a letter written by Dickens to the Editor of the "Morning Chronicle," during one of his Bath Road expeditions, which shows the conditions under which the work was done. It is dated a "Tuesday morning" in May, 1835, from The Bush Inn, Bristol, and states, to quote Forster, who does not give the letter verbatim:

He expects to forward "the conclusion of Russell's dinner" by Cooper's Company's coach leaving The Bush at half-past six next morning; and by the first Ball's coach on Thursday morning he will forward the report of the Bath dinner, endorsing the parcel for immediate delivery, with extra rewards for the porter. Beard is to go over to Bath next morning. He is himself to come back by the mail from Marlborough; he has no doubt, if Lord John makes a speech of any ordinary dimensions, it can be done by the time Marlborough is reached; "and taking into consideration the immense importance of having the addition of saddle-horses from thence, it is beyond all doubt, worth an effort. . . . I need not say," he continues, "that it will be sharp work and will require two of us; for we shall both be up the whole of the previous night, and shall have to sit up all night again to get it off in time." He adds that as soon as they have had a little sleep they will return to town as quickly as they can; but they have, if the express succeeds, to stop at sundry places along the road to pay money and notify satisfaction. And so, for himself and Beard, he is his editor's very sincerely.

Something to the same effect he said publicly twenty years later, on the occasion of his presiding, in May,

1865, at the second annual dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund.

"I have pursued the calling of a reporter under circumstances of which many of my brethren here can form no adequate conception. I have often transcribed for the printer, from my shorthand notes, important public speeches . . . on the palm of my hand, by the light of a dark lantern, in a post-chaise and four, galloping through a wild country, and through the dead of the night, at the then surprising rate of fifteen miles an hour. . . . Returning home from exciting political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known in this country. I have been, in my time, belated on miry by-roads, towards the small hours, forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheelless carriage, with exhausted horses and drunken post-boys, and have got back in time for publication, to be received with never-forgotten compliments."

The knowledge of the conditions of the road at that time is shown in the story told by the one-eyed ragman in an earlier chapter of *The Pickwick Papers*, when Tom Smart, of "the great house of Bilson and Slum, Cateaton Street, City," drove "the little neck-or-nothing sort of gig, with a clay-coloured body and red wheels, and the vixenish ill-tempered, fast-going bay mare that looked like a cross between a butcher's horse and a two-penny post-office pony." It was, we are told—

One winter's evening, about five o'clock, just as it began to grow dusk, a man in a gig might have been

THE WAGGON AND HORSES INN, BECKHAMPTON

'It was a strange old place, built of a kind of shingle, inlaid, as it were, with cross-beams, with gabled-topped windows projecting completely over the pathway, and a low door with a dark porch.'

[To face p. 173.

seen urging his tired horse along the road which leads across Marlborough Downs, in the direction of Bristol.

There are many pleasanter places even in this dreary world, than Marlborough Downs, when it blows hard; and if you throw in, beside, a gloomy winter's evening, a miry and sloppy road, and a pelting fall of heavy rain, and try the effect, by way of experiment, in your own proper person, you will experience the full force of this observation.

The wind blew—not up the road or down it, though that's bad enough, but sheer across it, sending the rain slanting down like the lines they used to rule in the copy-books at school, to make the boys slope well. For a moment it would die away, and the traveller would begin to delude himself into the belief that, exhausted with its previous fury, it had quietly lain itself down to rest, when, whoo! he would hear it growling and whistling in the distance, and on it would come rushing over the hill-tops, and sweeping along the plain, gathering sound and strength as it drew nearer, until it dashed with a heavy gust against horse and man, driving the sharp rain into their ears, and its cold damp breath into their very bones.

The clay-coloured gig with red wheels at length drew up, of her own accord, before a road-side inn on the right-hand side of the way, about half a quarter of a mile from the end of the Downs.

This is said to be the Waggon and Horses Inn at Beckhampton. Dickens describes the inn as follows:

It was a strange old place, built of a kind of shingle, inlaid, as it were, with cross-beams, with gabled-topped windows projecting completely over the pathway, and a low door with a dark porch, and a couple of steep steps leading down into the house, instead of the modern fashion of half-a-dozen shallow ones leading up to it.

It was a comfortable-looking place though, for there was a strong cheerful light in the bar-window.

Here Tom Smart drank hot punch in front of "a substantial matter-of-fact roaring fire, composed of something short of a bushel of coals, and wood enough to make half-a-dozen decent gooseberry bushes, piled half way up the chimney, and roaring and crackling with a sound that of itself would have warmed the heart of any reasonable man." With "his slippered feet on the fender, and his back to the open door," he saw "a charming prospect of the bar reflected in the glass over the chimney-piece, with delightful rows of green bottles and gold labels, together with jars of pickles and preserves, and cheeses and boiled hams, and rounds of beef, arranged on shelves in the most tempting and delicious array."

Tom began to fall in love with the buxom landlady, and after several tumblers of punch, went to bed in—

A good large room with big closets, and a bed which might have served for a whole boarding-school, to say nothing of a couple of oaken presses that would have held the baggage of a small army; but what struck Tom's fancy most was a strange, grim-looking high-backed chair, carved in the most fantastic manner, with a flowered damask cushion, and the round knobs at the bottom of the legs carefully tied up in red cloth, as if it had got the gout in its toes.

The story of Tom Smart's adventure in this room with the strangely carved chair, hardly concerns Mr Pickwick, so we must perforce refer the reader to Chapter Fourteen of *The Pickwick Papers* for full details of it.

THE ENTRANCE TO THE VILLAGE OF PICKWICK, NEAR BATH

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III

Returning to the Pickwickians themselves, we learn that the party reached Bath in safety.

At seven o'clock p.m. Mr Pickwick and his friends, and Mr Dowler and his wife, respectively retired to their private sitting-rooms at the White Hart Hotel, opposite the Great Pump Room, Bath, where the waiters, from their costume, might be mistaken for Westminster boys, only they destroy the illusion by behaving themselves much better.

The White Hart is gone now; it does not hold a long record in Dickensian annals, as very little indeed is said about it, and Mr Pickwick stayed there a night or two only, prior to taking lodgings in the Royal Crescent; but it will always be remembered that a Mr Pickwick kept the hotel in the days when Dickens visited it!

This was the Moses Pickwick to whom Sam Weller referred when the Bath coach was standing outside the White Horse Cellar in London. His grandfather, Eleazer Pickwick, was a foundling picked up at the village of Pickwick, nine miles from Bath. This Eleazer Pickwick founded the coaching business carried on by his grandson Moses with much success; this Moses Pickwick also became the proprietor of the White Hart Inn at Bath, the starting place of the coaches. The hotel was demolished in 1867, and the present Grand Pump Room Hotel stands on its site. The effigy of the White

Hart which formerly adorned the entrance is now to be seen at the White Hart Inn at Widcombe, a suburb of Bath.

If, as there is reason to suppose, Dickens visited Bath in 1837, just when the Bath chapters were being written, it must have been a peculiar experience for him, the famous author of *Pickwick*, the book which everybody was reading, to travel to Bath by the Pickwick coach and to stop at mine host Pickwick's hotel.

The morning after their arrival at the White Hart Hotel, Mr Pickwick was visited by Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esq., the Master of the Ceremonies.

"Welcome to Ba-ath, sir. This is indeed an acquisition. Most welcome to Ba-ath, sir. It is long—very long, Mr Pickwick, since you drank the waters. It appears an age, Mr Pickwick. Re-markable!" . . .

"It is a very long time since I drank the waters, certainly," replied Mr Pickwick; "for to the best of my knowledge I was never here before."

"Never in Ba-ath, Mr Pickwick!" exclaimed the Grand Master, letting the hand fall in astonishment. "Never in Ba-ath! He! he! Mr Pickwick, you are a wag. Not bad, not bad. Good, good. He! he! he! Re-markable!"

. . . . . .

"Bantam," said Mr Dowler, "Mr Pickwick and his friends are strangers. They must put their names down. Where's the book?"

"The register of the distinguished visitors in Ba-ath will be at the Pump Room this morning at two o'clock," replied the M.C. "Will you guide our friends to that

PARK STREET, BATH

'Mr Pickwick . . . arrived at the unanimous conclusion that Park Street was very much like the perpendicular streets a man sees in a dream, which he cannot get up for the life of him.'

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splendid building, and enable me to procure their autographs?"

Strange to say, it was to the Assembly Rooms and not to the Pump Room that the party was conducted, for we read—

At the appointed hour, Mr Pickwick and his friends, escorted by Dowler, repaired to the Assembly Rooms, and wrote their names down in a book. An instance of condescension at which Angelo Bantam was even more overpowered than before.

Bantam's mission was not without its object, as he succeeded in getting the party to promise to attend the Assembly Rooms that evening.

"This is a ball-night," said the M.C. . . . "The ball-nights in Ba-ath are moments snatched from Paradise; rendered bewitching by music, beauty, elegance, fashion, etiquette, and—and—above all, by the absence of tradespeople, . . . who have an amalgamation of themselves at the Guildhall every fortnight, which is, to say the least, remarkable."

Prior to attending the ball at the Assembly Rooms that evening, Mr Pickwick, we are informed, took a short walk through the city, and "arrived at the unanimous conclusion that Park Street was very much like the perpendicular streets a man sees in a dream, which he cannot get up for the life of him."

The Assembly Rooms, where Mr Pickwick made the acquaintance of Lord Mutanhead, the Dowager Lady

Snuphanuph, Mrs Colonel Wugsby and Miss Bolo, are intact.

Bath being full, the company, and the sixpences for tea, poured in, in shoals. In the ball-room, the long card-room, the octagonal card-room, the staircases, and the passages, the hum of many voices, and the sound of many feet, were perfectly bewildering. Dresses rustled, feathers waved, lights shone, and jewels sparkled. There was the music—not of the quadrille band, for it had not yet commenced; but the music of soft, tiny footsteps, with now and then a clear merry laugh—low and gentle, but very pleasant to hear in a female voice, whether in Bath or elsewhere. . . .

In the tea-room, and hovering round the card-tables, were a vast number of queer old ladies and decrepit old gentlemen, discussing all the small talk and scandal of the day, with a relish and gusto which sufficiently bespoke the intensity of the pleasure they derived from the occupation. Mingled with these groups were three or four matchmaking mammas, appearing to be wholly absorbed by the conversation in which they were taking part, but failing not from time to time to cast an anxious sidelong glance upon their daughters, who, remembering the maternal injunction to make the best use of their youth, had already commenced incipient flirtations in the mislaying of scarves, putting on gloves, setting down cups, and so forth; slight matters, apparently, but which may be turned to surprisingly good account by expert practitioners.

Lounging near the doors, and in remote corners, were various knots of silly young men, displaying various varieties of puppyism and stupidity. . . .

And lastly, seated on some of the back benches, where they had already taken up their positions for the evening, were divers unmarried ladies past their grand

MR PICKWICK IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BATH

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climacteric, who, not dancing because there were no partners for them, and not playing cards lest they should be set down as irretrievably single, were in the favourable situation of being able to abuse everybody without reflecting on themselves.

The very room where the famous game of cards was played is to be seen: and it is to be remembered that Dickens gave readings in the large hall on 9th February, 1867, and 29th January, 1869.

The original of Mr Bantam was Mr Jervois, who was the M.C. of Bath at the time *Pickwick* was written. He lived at No. 7 Portland Place, although it was in Queen Square that Dickens located this eccentric creation to whom Sam was despatched for the tickets for the Assembly Ball.

Sam Weller put on his hat in a very easy and graceful manner, and thrusting his hands in his waistcoat pockets, walked with great deliberation to Queen Square, whistling as he went along, several of the most popular airs of the day, as arranged with entirely new movements for that noble instrument the organ, either mouth or barrel. Arriving at the number in Queen Square to which he had been directed, he left off whistling, and gave a cheerful knock, which was instantaneously answered by a powdered-headed footman in gorgeous livery, and of symmetrical stature.

"Is this here Mr Bantam's, old feller?" inquired Sam Weller, nothing abashed by the blaze of splendour which burst upon his sight, in the person of the powdered-headed footman with the gorgeous livery.

"Why, young man?" was the haughty inquiry of the powdered-headed footman.

"'Cos if it is, jist you step into him with that 'ere

card, and say Mr Veller's a waitin', will you?" said Sam. And saying it, he very coolly walked into the hall, and sat down.

Eleazer Pickwick, brother of Moses, lived at No. 10 Queen Square in 1837. It is interesting to note that at the same time a man named A. Snodgrass was living at No. 16 Trim Street.

It was to Queen Square that Sam came again on the occasion of his invitation by the select company of Bath Footmen, to the "friendly swarry, consisting of a boiled leg of mutton with the usual trimmings." Here he met Mr Joseph Smauker, "leaning his powdered head against a lamp-post," and with him "walked towards High Street," and, turning "down a by-street," reached "a small greengrocer's shop."

Crossing the greengrocer's shop, and putting their hats on the stairs in the little passage behind it, they walked into a small parlour; and here the full splendour of the scene burst upon Mr Weller's view.

A couple of tables were put together in the middle of the parlour, covered with three or four cloths of different ages and dates of washing, arranged to look as much like one as the circumstances of the case would allow. Upon these were laid knives and forks for six or eight people. Some of the knife handles were green, others red, and a few yellow; and as all the forks were black, the combination of colours was exceedingly striking. Plates for a corresponding number of guests were warming behind the fender; and the guests themselves were warming before it.

The identity of the " small greengrocer's shop " has not yet been established. " The Beaufort Arms " cannot be associated with it definitely, as several seem to think; but that it was a rendezvous of the Bath Footmen, at the time when Dickens visited Bath, there is not much doubt; and that " swarries " such as Dickens describes were not an uncommon event, is also a fact; but how Dickens came to know them so intimately as he makes us believe, is hard to say.

IV

Dickens improves upon the legend associated with the foundation of Bath, by introducing " The True Legend of Prince Bladud " as a separate story, discovered by Mr Pickwick in his lodgings in the Crescent.

He discards with a few words the story of the sagacious pig that was fond of bathing in rich moist mud, and of Bladud, who followed his example and was so cured of leprosy, and founded the famous baths as a thank-offering, and proceeds to tell us the *true* legend. The unhappy love-sick Bladud, being bound for Athens, " wandered as far out of his way as Bath."

There was no city where Bath stands, then. There was no vestige of human habitation, or sign of man's resort, to bear the name; but there was the same noble country, the same broad expanse of hill and dale, the same beautiful channel stealing on, far away; the same lofty mountains which, like the troubles of life, viewed at a distance and partially obscured by the bright mist

of its morning, lose their ruggedness and asperity, and seem all ease and softness. Moved by the gentle beauty of the scene, the Prince sank upon the green turf, and bathed his swollen feet in his tears.

The story further tells how, in answer to Prince Bladud's wish that his wanderings might end in Bath—

The ground opened beneath the Prince's feet; he sunk into the chasm; and instantaneously it closed upon his head for ever, save where his hot tears welled up through the earth, and where they have continued to gush forth ever since.

It is observable that, to this day, large numbers of elderly ladies and gentlemen who have been disappointed in procuring partners, and almost as many young ones who are anxious to obtain them, repair annually to Bath to drink the waters, from which they derive much strength and comfort. This is most complimentary to the virtue of Prince Bladud's tears, and strongly corroborative of the veracity of this legend.

Less than two hundred years ago, on one of the public baths in this city, there appeared an inscription in honour of its mighty founder, the renowned Prince Bladud. That inscription is now erased.

The bath referred to was the King's Bath, which is also the subject of a facetious remark of Angelo Cyrus Bantam, M.C., on his introduction to Mr Pickwick.

"You are the gentleman residing on Clapham Green," resumed Bantam, "who lost the use of his limbs from imprudently taking cold after port wine; who could not be moved in consequence of acute suffering, and who had the water from the King's

A CORNER OF THE PUMP-ROOM, BATH

'The great pump-room is a spacious saloon, ornamented with Corinthian pillars, and a music gallery, and a Tompion clock, and a statue of Nash, and a golden inscription, to which all the water-drinkers should attend, for it appeals to them in the cause of a deserving charity.'

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Bath bottled at one hundred and three degrees, and sent by waggon to his bedroom in town, where he bathed, sneezed, and the same day recovered. Very re-markable! "

Mr Pickwick acknowledged the compliment which the supposition implied, but had the self-denial to repudiate it, notwithstanding.

The description of the Pump Room is a remarkably detailed one considering the few opportunities Dickens had of seeing it.

The great pump-room is a spacious saloon, ornamented with Corinthian pillars, and a music gallery, and a Tompion clock, and a statue of Nash, and a golden inscription, to which all the water-drinkers should attend, for it appeals to them in the cause of a deserving charity. There is a large bar with a marble vase, out of which the pumper gets the water; and there are a number of yellow-looking tumblers, out of which the company get it; and it is a most edifying and satisfactory sight to behold the perseverance and gravity with which they swallow it. There are baths near at hand, in which a part of the company wash themselves; and a band plays afterwards, to congratulate the remainder on their having done so. There is another pump-room, into which infirm ladies and gentlemen are wheeled, in such an astonishing variety of chairs and chaises, that any adventurous individual who goes in with the regular number of toes, is in imminent danger of coming out without them; and there is a third, into which the quiet people go, for it is less noisy than either. There is an immensity of promenading, on crutches and off, with sticks and without, and a great deal of conversation, and liveliness, and pleasantry.

Dickens had surely a little fun to poke at the visitors to the Pump Room at Bath when he says:

Mr Pickwick began to drink the waters with the utmost assiduity. Mr Pickwick took them systematically. He drank a quarter of a pint before breakfast, and then walked up a hill; and another quarter of a pink after breakfast, and then walked down a hill; and after every fresh quarter of a pint, Mr Pickwick declared, in the most solemn and emphatic terms, that he felt a great deal better; whereat his friends were very much delighted, though they had not been previously aware that there was anything the matter with him.

Mr Weller's opinion of the Bath waters was communicated to Mr Smauker on their way to the "swarry."

"Have you drank the waters, Mr Weller?" inquired his companion, as they walked towards High Street.

"Once," replied Sam.

"What did you think of 'em, sir?"

"I thought they wos particklery unpleasant," replied Sam.

"Ah," said Mr John Smauker, "you disliked the killibeate taste, perhaps?"

"I don't know much about that 'ere," said Sam. "I thought they'd a wery strong flavour o' warm flat irons."

"That *is* the killibeate, Mr Weller," observed Mr John Smauker, contemptuously.

"Well, if it is, it's a wery inexpressive word, that's all," said Sam. "It may be, but I ain't much in the chimical line myself, so I can't say."

BUST OF DICKENS, BY PERCY FITZGERALD,
IN THE PUMP-ROOM, BATH

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Dickens criticises the monotony of the life of the Bath visitor in the following terse account of their daily round.

The regular water drinkers, Mr Pickwick among the number, met each other in the Pump Room, took their quarter of a pint, and walked constitutionally. At the afternoon's promenade . . . all the great people and all the morning water drinkers, met in grand assemblage. After this they walked out, or drove out or were pushed out in bath chairs. . . . After this they went home. If it were Theatre night, perhaps they met at the theatre; if it were Assembly night, they met at the rooms; and if it were neither they met the next day.

V

The Pickwickians stayed in Bath for about four months. They arrived on the 16th February and left, according to Chapter Forty, the end of the first week in Trinity term.

As Mr Pickwick contemplated a stay of at least two months in Bath, he deemed it advisable to take private lodgings for himself and friends for that period; and as a favourable opportunity offered for their securing, on moderate terms, the upper portion of a house in the Royal Crescent, which was larger than they required, Mr and Mrs Dowler offered to relieve them of a bed-room and sitting-room. This proposition was at once accepted, and in three days' time they were all located in their new abode.

The number of the house is not given, but as the houses are practically all of one pattern, and only numbers 15 and 16 were, in those days, let out in lodgings, it is not difficult for us to make a choice.

The landlady's name was Mrs Craddock, the name of the landlady of the cottage at Chalk, where Dickens spent his honeymoon a few months before the Bath chapters were written.

Here Mr Winkle met with that never failing mirth-provoking adventure with the sedan chair.

Mrs Dowler was out at a party. Mr Dowler had promised to wait up for her return, but fell asleep, with this result:

Just as the clock struck three, there were blown into the Crescent a sedan-chair, with Mrs Dowler inside, borne by one short fat chairman, and one long thin one, who had much ado all the way to keep their bodies perpendicular, to say nothing of the chair; but on that high ground, and in the Crescent, which the wind swept round and round as if it were going to tear the paving stones up, its fury was tremendous. They were very glad to set the chair down, and give a good round loud double-knock at the street door.

They waited some time, but nobody came.

"Servants is in the arms o' Porpus, I think," said the short chairman, warming his hands at the attendant link-boy's torch.

"I wish he'd give 'em a squeeze and wake 'em," observed the long one.

"Knock again, will you, if you please," cried Mrs Dowler from the chair. "Knock two or three times, if you please."

The short man was quite willing to get the job over,

THE CRESCENT, BATH

'But Mr Winkle . . . no sooner heard the horrible threat of the valorous Dowler, than he bounced out of the sedan, quite as quickly as he had bounced in, and throwing off his slippers into the road, took to his heels and tore round the Crescent, hotly pursued by Dowler and the watchman.'

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as soon as possible; so he stood on the step, and gave four or five most startling double-knocks, of eight or ten knocks a piece, while the long man went into the road, and looked up at the windows for a light.

Nobody came. It was all as silent and as dark as ever.

"Dear me!" said Mrs Dowler. "You must knock again, if you please."

"There ain't a bell, is there, ma'am?" said the short chairman.

"Yes, there is," interposed the link-boy, "I've been a ringing at it ever so long."

"It's only a handle," said Mrs Dowler, "the wire's broken."

"I wish the servants' heads wos," growled the long man.

"I must trouble you to knock again, if you please," said Mrs Dowler with the utmost politeness.

The short man did knock again several times, without producing the smallest effect. The tall man, growing very impatient, then relieved him, and kept on perpetually knocking double-knocks of two loud knocks each, like an insane postman.

At length Mr Winkle began to dream that he was at a club, and that the members being very refractory, the chairman was obliged to hammer the table a good deal to preserve order; then he had a confused notion of an auction room where there were no bidders, and the auctioneer was buying everything in; and ultimately he began to think it just within the bounds of possibility that somebody might be knocking at the street door. To make quite certain, however, he remained quiet in bed for ten minutes or so, and listened; and when he had counted two or three and thirty knocks, he felt quite satisfied, and gave himself a great deal of credit for being so wakeful.

"Rap rap—rap rap—rap rap—ra, ra, ra, ra, ra, rap," went the knocker.

Mr Winkle jumped out of bed, wondering very much what could possibly be the matter, and hastily putting on his stockings and slippers, folded his dressing-gown round him, lighted a flat candle from the rush-light that was burning in the fire-place, and hurried downstairs.

"Here's somebody comin' at last, ma'am," said the short chairman.

"I wish I wos behind him vith a bradawl," muttered the long one.

"Who's there?" cried Mr Winkle, undoing the chain.

"Don't stop to ask questions, cast-iron head," replied the long man, with great disgust; taking it for granted that the inquirer was a footman; "open the door."

"Come, look sharp, timber eye-lids," added the other, encouragingly.

Mr Winkle, being half asleep, obeyed the command mechanically, opened the door a little, and peeped out. The first thing he saw was the red glare of the link-boy's torch. Startled by the sudden fear that the house might be on fire, he hastily threw the door wide open, and holding the candle above his head, stared eagerly before him, not quite certain whether what he saw was a sedan-chair or a fire engine. At this instant there came a violent gust of wind: the light was blown out; Mr Winkle felt himself irresistibly impelled on to the steps, and the door blew to, with a loud crash.

"Well, young man, now you *have* done it," said the short chairman.

Mr Winkle, catching sight of a lady's face at the window of the sedan, turned hastily round, plied the knocker with all his might and main, and called frantically upon the chairmen to take the chair away again.

MR WINKLE'S ADVENTURE IN THE CRESCENT AT BATH

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"Take it away, take it away," cried Mr Winkle. "Here's somebody coming out of another house; put me into the chair. Hide me—do something with me."

All this time he was shivering with cold, and every time he raised his hand to the knocker the wind took the dressing gown in a most unpleasant manner.

"The people are coming down the Crescent now. There are ladies with 'em; cover me up with something. Stand before me," roared Mr Winkle. But the chairmen were too much exhausted with laughing to afford him the slightest assistance, and the ladies were every moment approaching nearer and nearer.

Mr Winkle gave a last hopeless knock; the ladies were only a few doors off. He threw away the extinguished candle which all this time he had held above his head, and fairly bolted into the sedan-chair where Mrs Dowler was.

Now, Mrs Craddock had heard the knocking and the voices at last; and, only waiting to put something smarter on her head than her night-cap, ran down into the front drawing-room to make sure that it was the right party. Throwing up the window-sash as Mr Winkle was rushing into the chair, she no sooner caught sight of what was going forward below, than she raised a vehement and dismal shriek, and implored Mr Dowler to get up directly, for his wife was running away with another gentleman.

Upon this Mr Dowler bounced off the bed as abruptly as an India-rubber ball, and, rushing into the front room, arrived at one window just as Mr Pickwick threw up the other: when the first object that met the gaze of both was Mr Winkle bolting into the sedan-chair.

"Watchman," shouted Dowler furiously; "stop him—hold him—keep him tight—shut him in, till I come down. I'll cut his throat—give me a knife—from ear to ear, Mrs Craddock—I will!" And breaking from the shrieking landlady, and from Mr Pickwick the

indignant husband seized a small supper-knife, and tore into the street.

But Mr Winkle didn't wait for him. He no sooner heard the horrible threat of the valorous Dowler, than he bounced out of the sedan, quite as quickly as he had bounced in, and, throwing off his slippers into the road, took to his heels and tore round the Crescent, hotly pursued by Dowler and the watchman. He kept ahead; the door was open as he came round the second time; he rushed in, slammed it in Dowler's face, mounted to his bedroom, locked the door, piled a wash-hand-stand, chest of drawers, and table against it, and packed up a few necessaries ready for flight with the first ray of morning.

Dowler came up to the outside of the door; avowed, through the keyhole, his steadfast determination of cutting Mr Winkle's throat next day; and, after a great confusion of voices in the drawing-room, amidst which that of Mr Pickwick was distinctly heard endeavouring to make peace, the inmates dispersed to their several bed-chambers, and all was quiet once more.

Some writers assert that Dickens was in error in stating that Winkle ran round and round the Crescent hotly pursued by Mr Dowler and the watchman, and that he had the Circus in his mind; but we do not hold that opinion. It is on record that Dickens made several alterations in the pictures submitted by Phiz; that the houses in the drawing show the houses in the Crescent. It was quite consistent with the account that Winkle ran round and round the Crescent, that Winkle should double back when he got to the end of the semi-circular sweep, and so eventually reach safety in his own door; had he been running round the Circus he

could have eluded his pursuers very well by means of one of the turnings. There is another fact to be noted; if in the Circus, Winkle could not have observed the party in the distance coming towards him, and would not at all times have been visible to his pursuers; also Dickens describes the Crescent as an exposed and unsheltered place, which description would not apply to the Circus.

VI

Wishing to escape from the wrath of the valorous Dowler, Mr Winkle resolved to quit Bath for the neighbouring town of Bristol. With this in view he " grasped his carpet-bag, and, creeping stealthily downstairs, shut the detestable street-door with as little noise as possible, and walked off. Bending his steps towards the Royal Hotel, he found a coach on the point of starting for Bristol, and, thinking Bristol as good a place for his purpose as any other he could go to, he mounted the box, and reached his place of destination in such time as the pair of horses, who went the whole stage and back again twice a day or more, could be reasonably supposed to arrive there."

The Royal Hotel of those days is the present York House Hotel, and called the Royal since Queen Victoria stayed there in 1830, when Princess. Dickens stayed here on the occasion of his visit in 1867.

Arrived at Bristol, " he took up his quarters at The

Bush, designing to postpone any communication by letter with Mr Pickwick until it was probable that Mr Dowler's wrath might have in some degree evaporated."

The Bush is gone now; until 1864 it stood near the Guildhall on the site now occupied by Lloyd's Bank.

His quarters fixed, Mr Winkle walked forth to view the city, which "struck him as being a shade more dirty than any place he had ever seen. Having inspected the docks and shipping, and viewed the cathedral, he inquired his way to Clifton, and, being directed thither, took the route which was pointed out to him. But, as the pavements of Bristol are not the widest or cleanest upon earth, so its streets are not altogether the straightest or least intricate; Mr Winkle, being greatly puzzled by their manifold windings and twistings, looked about him for a decent shop in which he could apply afresh, for counsel and instruction."

This he found in the surgery of "Sawyer, late Nockemorf," which it has been suggested might have been situated in Park Street, quite a different sort of thoroughfare then from what it is to-day.

In the days of Mr Pickwick the street was much steeper, the viaduct not having yet been built, and at the bottom was an old-fashioned chemist's shop that is said to have answered the description of "something between a shop and a private house."

His eye fell upon a newly-painted tenement which had been recently converted into something between a shop and a private house, and which a red lamp,

projecting over the fan-light of the street-door, would have sufficinetly announced as the residence of a medical practitioner, even if the word " Surgery " had not been inscribed in golden characters on a wainscot ground, above the window of what, in times bygone, had been the front parlour. Thinking this an eligible place wherein to make his inquiries, Mr Winkle stepped into the little shop where the gilt-labelled drawers and bottles were; and finding nobody there, knocked with a half-crown on the counter, to attract the attention of anybody who might happen to be in the back parlour.

Here Mr Winkle encountered Mr Bob Sawyer, late of Guy's and Lant Street, making very merry with his old friend Mr Benjamin Allen, and after a convivial evening, during which he learned that Arabella Allen, who had won his heart at Dingley Dell, was living on the outskirts of the city, he returned to The Bush, to meet the very Mr Dowler he had so zealously sought to avoid. However, as it transpired that both had run away from each other, friendship was soon restored.

VII

Meanwhile Mr Pickwick was much concerned for the safety of his protégé, and with the assistance of Sam, it was discovered that " an individual, in every respect answering Mr Winkle's description, had gone over to Bristol that morning, by the branch coach from the Royal Hotel," and Sam was instructed to follow him, and inform his master immediately he had been dis-

covered, and meanwhile to " knock him down or lock him up " if he attempted to run away.

Early next morning, Sam Weller made his appearance at The Bush, and by means of a trick locked the unfortunate Winkle in his room until such time as Mr Pickwick should arrive from Bath, and " at eight o'clock in the evening Mr Pickwick himself walked into the coffee-room of the Bush tavern, and told Sam with a smile, to his very great relief, that he had done quite right."

Ascertaining from Mr Winkle that Arabella Allen was " immured . . . somewhere near the Downs," it was decided that Sam Weller should start next morning on an expedition of discovery.

" Away he walked, up one street and down another—we were going to say, up one hill and down another, only it's all uphill at Clifton—without meeting with anything or anybody that tended to throw the faintest light on the matter in hand."

The Clifton Suspension Bridge was not erected at that time. It was not until 1863 that it was removed from Charing Cross to Bristol, else Dickens, in viewing through the eyes of Sam the old Hungerford Bridge, might have revived the scene of his early sufferings as a poor boy in the Blacking Factory.

Sam struggled across the Downs against a good high wind, wondering whether it was always necessary to hold your hat on with both hands in that part of the country, and came to a shady by-place about which were sprinkled several little villas of quiet and secluded

THE SUSPENSION BRIDGE AT CLIFTON;
FORMERLY HUNGERFORD BRIDGE, LONDON, NEAR WHICH
DICKENS WORKED AS A BOY

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appearance. Outside a stable-door at the bottom of a long back lane without a thoroughfare, a groom in undress was idling about, apparently persuading himself that he was doing something with a spade and a wheelbarrow.

Sam strolled down the lane, sat upon " a good large stone just opposite the wheelbarrow," and vainly endeavoured to elicit some information from the " surly groom," who ultimately waxed very wroth and disappeared.

Sam continued to sit on the large stone, meditating upon what was best to be done, and revolving in his mind a plan for knocking at all the doors within five miles of Bristol, taking them at a hundred and fifty or two hundred a day, and endeavouring to find Miss Arabella by that expedient. . . . Into the lane where he sat, there opened three or four garden-gates, belonging to as many houses, which though detached from each other, were only separated by their gardens. As these were large and long, and well planted with trees, the houses were not only at some distance off, but the greater part of them were nearly concealed from view. Sam was sitting with his eyes fixed upon the dust-heap outside the next gate to that by which the groom had disappeared, profoundly turning over in his mind the difficulties of his present undertaking, when the gate opened, and a female servant came out into the lane to shake some bedside carpets.

Here Sam encountered Mary the housemaid, whom he had previously met at the house of Mr Nupkins the Mayor, at Ipswich, and to whom he had indited his famous valentine.

From her, Sam learnt that Arabella Allen was living in the next house, the one to which the " surly groom " was attached, and after helping Mary to shake the carpets (can we not on the spot conjure up the delightful scene?) arranged to come back in the evening, when he obtained the interview with Arabella from the pear tree. The result of this was that on the following evening Mr Pickwick, in the hope of being able to intercede with the young lady, proceeded to the garden, aided by Sam and a dark lantern.

The lantern played all sorts of tricks in the hands of Mr Pickwick, sending its beam of light in many an unwanted direction. After Mr Pickwick, by the aid of Sam's back, had the interview with Arabella over the garden wall, Mr Winkle declared his passion; Mr Pickwick " keeping guard in the lane with that 'ere dark lantern, like an amiable Guy Fawkes," to quote Sam.

" While these things were going on in the open air, an elderly gentleman of scientific attainments was seated in his library, two or three houses off, writing a philosophical treatise " and " was very much surprised by observing a most brilliant light glide through the air, at a short distance above the ground, and almost instantaneously vanish." This caused him to speculate on the origin of so strange a phenomenon. " They were not meteors; they were too low. They were not glow-worms; they were too high. They were not will-o'-the-wisps; they were not fire-flies; they were not fire-works. What could they be? Some extraordinary and wonderful phenomenon of nature, which no philosopher had ever seen before; something

which it had been reserved for him alone to discover, and which he should immortalise his name by chronicling for the benefit of posterity."

Venturing as far as the garden gate, he met the party returning down the lane, and Sam, "seeing a man's head peeping out very cautiously within half a yard of his own, gave it a gentle tap with his clenched fist, which knocked it, with a hollow sound, against the gate. Having performed this feat with great suddenness and dexterity, Mr Weller caught Mr Pickwick up on his back, and followed Mr Winkle down the lane at a pace which, considering the burden he carried, was perfectly astonishing."

The result of that evening's amusing adventure was that the scientific gentleman in a masterly treatise demonstrated "that these wonderful lights were the effect of electricity; and clearly proved the same by detailing how a flash of fire danced before his eyes when he put his head out of the gate, and how he received a shock which stunned him for a quarter of an hour afterwards; which demonstration delighted all the Scientific Associations beyond measure, and caused him to be considered a light of science ever afterwards."

The remainder of the period which Mr Pickwick had assigned as the duration of the stay at Bath, passed over without the occurrence of anything material. Trinity term commenced. On the expiration of its first week, Mr Pickwick and his friends returned to London; and the former gentleman, attended of course by Sam, straightway repaired to his old quarters at the George and Vulture.

THE SIXTH AND LAST PILGRIMAGE

THE SIXTH AND LAST PILGRIMAGE

To Bristol and Birmingham

I

MR WINKLE'S secret marriage to Arabella Allen was responsible for the last recorded pilgrimage of Mr Pickwick. It was not the plight of Mrs Bardell that moved him to seek release from the Fleet Prison, when the advice of his lawyer, Mr Perker, failed to take effect; it will be recalled that the plaintiff in the recent Breach of Promise action had herself been put into the Fleet for failing to pay the costs in the action, which the wily Dodson & Fogg had taken "on spec," hoping to get their costs out of Mr Pickwick. That having failed, they seized upon Mrs Bardell, and that much maligned lady had arranged with Mr Perker to give Mr Pickwick a full release for the damages she had been awarded, if Mr Pickwick would pay the costs, which would bring about the release of both of them simultaneously. But Mr Pickwick was not to be moved until Arabella Allen, now Mrs Winkle, entreated him to help her, saying that it was only he who could appease the wrath of her brother.

"Dear Mr Pickwick, he must only know it from you—from your lips alone. He is so violent, so prejudiced, and has been so—so anxious in behalf of his friend, Mr Sawyer," added Arabella, looking down, "that I fear the consequences dreadfully."

And thus did Mr Pickwick succumb; he paid the costs, got released from the odious Fleet, and decided to extend his journey from Bristol (where Benjamin Allen resided) to Birmingham, where he would break the news to Mr Winkle senior, and hope to receive his forgiveness for his son.

The evening before the last journey, was spent at the George and Vulture, in George Yard, Lombard Street, and next morning Mr Pickwick and Sam set out, not by the regular coach, but by a post-coach, Mr Pickwick being the inside passenger, with Sam Weller mounted in the little dickey behind.

"Sir," called out Mr Weller to his master.

"Well, Sam," replied Mr Pickwick, thrusting his head out of the window.

"I wish them horses had been three months and better in the Fleet, sir."

"Why, Sam?" inquired Mr Pickwick.

"Wy, sir," exclaimed Mr Weller, rubbing his hands, "how they would go if they had been!"

And that is all we are told of the journey to Bristol.

II

"A conspiracy," "a regular plant," "a disgraceful imposition," "nothing but a do," were the expressions used by Ben Allen, Bob Sawyer, Ben's Aunt, and the man Martin, when Mr Pickwick broke the news to them. But the convivial Bob was eventually brought round (not without application to a certain black bottle) and freely and of his own accord drank to the health and happiness of Mr and Mrs Winkle.

Mr Pickwick, declining to accept the invitation of Bob Sawyer to make a jolly night of it, retired to his old quarters at The Bush. He spent the evening in the Travellers' Room, where he renewed acquaintance with the one-eyed bagman, the same who had entertained him at Eatanswill with the story of Tom Smart and the wonderful chair. On this occasion the bagman related the wonderful story of the adventures that had befallen his uncle in Edinburgh, when he encountered the collection of old mail coaches that suddenly came to life, which ended in the question by the landlord of The Bush, "I wonder what these ghosts of mail coaches carry in their bags?" which brought forth the reply of the bagman, "The dead letters, of course."

The horses were put to, punctually at a quarter before nine next morning, and Mr Pickwick and Sam Weller having each taken his seat, the one inside and the other out, the postillion was duly directed to repair in the first instance to Mr Bob Sawyer's house, for the purpose of taking up Mr Benjamin Allen.

It was with feelings of no small astonishment, when the carriage drew up before the door with the red lamp, and the very legible inscription of "Sawyer, late Nockemorf," that Mr Pickwick saw, on popping his head out of the coach-window, the boy in the grey livery very busily employed in putting up the shutters.

Bob Sawyer explained this very unbusiness-like proceeding by announcing to Mr Pickwick his determination of joining the party, and was not to be deterred by Mr Pickwick's explanation that the chaise would only hold two, and that he was pledged to Mr Allen.

"Don't think of me for a minute," replied Bob. "I've arranged it all: Sam and I share the dickey between us." . . .

Mr Bob Sawyer pushed the postboy on one side, jerked his friend into the vehicle, slammed the door, put up the steps, wafered the bill on the street-door, locked it, put the key in his pocket, jumped into the dickey, gave the word for starting; and did the whole with such extraordinary precipitation, that before Mr Pickwick had well begun to consider whether Mr Bob Sawyer ought to go or not, they were rolling away with Mr Bob Sawyer thoroughly established as part and parcel of the equipage.

So long as their progress was confined to the streets of Bristol, the facetious Bob kept his professional green spectacles on, and conducted himself with becoming steadiness and gravity of demeanour, merely giving utterance to divers verbal witticisms for the exclusive behoof and entertainment of Mr Samuel Weller, but when they emerged upon the open road, he threw off his green spectacles and his gravity together, and performed a great variety of practical jokes, which were

rather calculated, perhaps, to attract the attention of the passers-by, and to render the carriage and those it contained, objects of more than ordinary curiosity; the least conspicuous among these feats being a most vociferous imitation of a key-bugle, and the ostentatious display of a crimson silk pocket-handkerchief attached to a walking-stick, which was occasionally waved in the air with various gestures indicative of supremacy and defiance.

"I wonder," said Mr Pickwick, stopping in the midst of a most sedate conversation with Ben Allen, bearing reference to the numerous good qualities of Mr Winkle and his sister—"I wonder what all the people we pass, can see in us to make them stare so."

"It's a neat turn-out," replied Ben Allen, with something of pride in his tone. "They're not used to see this sort of thing every day, I dare say."

"Possibly," replied Mr Pickwick. "It may be so. Perhaps it is."

Mr Pickwick might very probably have reasoned himself into the belief that it really was: had he not, just then happening to look out of the coach window, observed that the looks of the passengers betokened anything but respectful astonishment, and that various telegraphic communications appeared to be passing between them and some persons outside the vehicle: whereupon it occurred to him that these demonstrations might be, in some remote degree, referable to the humorous deportment of Mr Robert Sawyer.

"I hope," said Mr Pickwick, "that our volatile friend is committing no absurdities in that dickey behind."

"Oh dear, no," replied Ben Allen. "Except when he's elevated, Bob's the quietest creature breathing."

Here a prolonged imitation of a key-bugle broke upon the ear, succeeded by cheers and screams, all of which evidently proceeded from the throat and lungs of the

quietest creature breathing, or, in plainer designation, of Mr Bob Sawyer himself.

Mr Pickwick and Mr Ben Allen looked expressively at each other, and the former gentleman, taking off his hat, and leaning out of the coach-window until nearly the whole of his waistcoat was outside it, was at length enabled to catch a glimpse of his facetious friend.

Mr Bob Sawyer was seated, not in the dickey, but on the roof of the chaise, with his legs as far asunder as they would conveniently go, wearing Mr Samuel Weller's hat on one side of his head, and bearing, in one hand, a most enormous sandwich, while, in the other, he supported a goodly-sized case-bottle, to both of which he applied himself with intense relish: varying the monotony of the occupation by an occasional howl, or the interchange of some lively *badinage* with any passing stranger. The crimson flag was carefully tied in an erect position to the rail of the dickey; and Mr Samuel Weller, decorated with Bob Sawyer's hat, was seated in the centre thereof, discussing a twin sandwich, with an animated countenance, the expression of which betokened his entire and perfect approval of the whole arrangement. . . .

"Mr Sawyer!" cried Mr Pickwick, in a state of great excitement. "Mr Sawyer, sir!"

"Hallo!" responded that gentleman, looking over the side of the chaise with all the coolness in life.

"Are you mad, sir?" demanded Mr Pickwick.

"Not a bit of it," replied Bob; "only cheerful."

"Cheerful, sir!" ejaculated Mr Pickwick. "Take down that scandalous red handkerchief, I beg. I insist, sir. Sam, take it down."

Before Sam could interpose, Mr Bob Sawyer gracefully struck his colours, and, having put them in his pocket, nodded in a courteous manner to Mr Pickwick, wiped the mouth of the case-bottle, and applied it to his

HOW MR PICKWICK TRAVELLED FROM BRISTOL
TO BIRMINGHAM

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own; thereby informing him, without any unnecessary waste of words, that he devoted that draught to wishing him all manner of happiness and prosperity. Having done this, Bob replaced the cork with great care, and, looking benignantly down on Mr Pickwick, took a large bite out of the sandwich, and smiled.

"Come," said Mr Pickwick, whose momentary anger was not quite proof against Bob's immoveable self-possession, "pray let us have no more of this absurdity, sir."

"No, no," replied Bob, once more exchanging hats with Mr Weller; "I didn't mean to do it, only I got so enlivened with the ride that I couldn't help it."

"Think of the look of the thing" expostulated Mr Pickwick; "have some regard to appearances."

"Oh, certainly," said Bob, "it's not the sort of thing at all. All over, governor."

Satisfied with this assurance, Mr Pickwick once more drew his head into the chaise and pulled up the glass; but he had scarcely resumed the conversation which Mr Bob Sawyer had interrupted, when he was somewhat startled by the apparition of a small dark body, of an oblong form, on the outside of the window, which gave sundry taps against it, as if impatient of admission.

"What's this?" exclaimed Mr Pickwick.

"It looks like a case-bottle," remarked Ben Allen, eyeing the object in question through his spectacles with some interest; "I rather think it belongs to Bob."

The impression was perfectly accurate, for Mr Bob Sawyer, having attached the case-bottle to the end of the walking-stick, was battering the window with it, in token of his wish that his friends inside would partake of its contents, in all good fellowship and harmony.

"What's to be done?" said Mr Pickwick, looking at the bottle. "This proceeding is more absurd than the other."

"I think it would be best to take it in," replied Mr Ben Allen; "it would serve him right to take it in and keep it, wouldn't it?"

"It would," said Mr Pickwick: "shall I?"

"I think it the most proper course we could possibly adopt," replied Ben.

This advice quite coinciding with his own opinion, Mr Pickwick gently let down the window and disengaged the bottle from the stick: upon which the latter was drawn up, and Mr Bob Sawyer was heard to laugh heartily.

"What a merry dog it is!" said Mr Pickwick, looking round at his companion, with the bottle in his hand.

"He is," said Mr Allen.

"You cannot possibly be angry with him," remarked Mr Pickwick.

"Quite out of the question," observed Benjamin Allen.

During this short interchange of sentiments, Mr Pickwick had, in an abstracted mood, uncorked the bottle.

"What is it?" inquired Ben Allen, carelessly.

"I don't know," replied Mr Pickwick, with equal carelessness "It smells, I think, like milk-punch."

"Oh, indeed?" said Ben.

"I *think* so," rejoined Mr Pickwick, very properly guarding himself against the possibility of stating an untruth: "mind, I could not undertake to say certainly, without tasting it."

"You had better do so," said Ben; "we may as well know what it is."

"Do you think so?" replied Mr Pickwick. "Well, if you are curious to know, of course I have no objection."

Ever willing to sacrifice his own feelings to the wishes of his friend, Mr Pickwick at once took a pretty long taste.

HOUSE, FORMERLY THE BELL INN, BERKELEY HEATH

'At the Bell at Berkeley Heath, to change horses. "I say! We're going to dine here, aren't we?" said Bob, looking in at the window.'

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"What is it?" inquired Ben Allen, interrupting him with some impatience.

"Curious," said Mr Pickwick, smacking his lips, "I hardly know, now. Oh, yes!" said Mr Pickwick, after a second taste. "It *is* punch."

Mr Ben Allen looked at Mr Pickwick; Mr Pickwick looked at Mr Ben Allen; Mr Ben Allen smiled; Mr Pickwick did not.

"It would serve him right," said the last-named gentleman, with some severity, "it would serve him right to drink it every drop."

"The very thing that occurred to me," said Ben Allen.

"Is it, indeed?" rejoined Mr Pickwick. "Then here's his health!" With these words, that excellent person took a most energetic pull at the bottle, and handed it to Ben Allen, who was not slow to imitate his example. The smiles became mutual, and the milk-punch was gradually and cheerfully disposed of.

"After all," said Mr Pickwick, as he drained the last drop, "his pranks are really very amusing; very entertaining indeed."

"You may say that," rejoined Mr Ben Allen. In proof of Bob Sawyer's being one of the funniest fellows alive, he proceeded to entertain Mr Pickwick with a long and circumstantial account of how that gentleman once drank himself into a fever and got his head shaved; the relation of which pleasant and agreeable history was only stopped by the stoppage of the chaise at the Bell at Berkeley Heath, to change horses.

III

The Bell Inn at Berkeley Heath was an unpretentious roadside inn until a few years ago, when it closed its doors as a public hostelry; it is now a private house.

The sign-post remains, but the sign-board has disappeared. This used to announce "Charles Dickens and Party lunched here 1827," which of course was not a fact; it was only a party of his characters!

"I say! We're going to dine here, aren't we?" said Bob, looking in at the window.

"Dine!" said Mr Pickwick. "Why, we have only come nineteen miles, and have eighty-seven and a half to go."

"Just the reason why we should take something to enable us to bear up against the fatigue," remonstrated Mr Bob Sawyer.

Mr Pickwick was somewhat out in the distance still to be covered to Birmingham, it being only 66 and not 87½ miles as he states. In answer to Bob, Mr Pickwick declared it was "Quite impossible to dine at half-past eleven o'clock."

"So it is," rejoined Bob, "lunch is the very thing. Hallo, you, sir! Lunch for three, directly, and keep the horses back for a quarter of an hour. Tell them to put everything they have cold, on the table, and some bottled ale, and let us taste your very best Madeira." Issuing these orders with monstrous importance and bustle, Mr Bob Sawyer at once hurried into the house to superintend the arrangements; in less than five minutes he returned and declared them to be excellent.

The quality of the lunch fully justified the eulogium which Bob had pronounced, and very great justice was done to it, not only by that gentleman, but Mr Ben Allen and Mr Pickwick also. Under the auspices of the three, the bottled ale and the Madeira were promptly

THE HOP POLE, TEWKESBURY

'At the Hop Pole at Tewkesbury, they stopped to dine; upon which occasion there was more bottled ale, with some more Madeira, and some port besides; and here the case-bottle was replenished for the fourth time. . . .'

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disposed of; and when (the horses being once more put to) they resumed their seats, with the case-bottle full of the best substitute for milk-punch that could be procured on so short a notice, the key-bugle sounded, and the red flag waved, without the slightest opposition on Mr Pickwick's part.

It is a pity that so fine and ancient a city as Gloucester should have no association with Dickens. The Pickwickians must have passed through it on this journey to Birmingham, but perhaps it was the " substitute for milk-punch " with which the case-bottle was filled that made them oblivious to its existence.

The next stopping place of the Pickwickians was Tewkesbury, ten miles from Gloucester, and here the Hop Pole still flourishes.

At the Hop Pole at Tewkesbury, they stopped to dine; upon which occasion there was more bottled ale, with some more Madeira, and some port besides; and here the case-bottle was replenished for the fourth time. Under the influence of these combined stimulants, Mr Pickwick and Mr Ben Allen fell fast asleep for thirty miles, while Bob and Sam Weller sang duets in the dickey.

It was quite dark when Mr Pickwick roused himself sufficiently to look out of the window. The straggling cottages by the roadside, the dingy hue of every object visible, the murky atmosphere, the paths of cinders and brick dust, the deep red glow of furnace fires in the distance, the volumes of dense smoke issuing heavily forth from high toppling chimneys, blackening and obscuring everything around; the glare of distant lights, the ponderous waggons which toiled along the road,

laden with clashing rods of iron, or piled with heavy goods—all betokened their rapid approach to the great working town of Birmingham.

As they rattled through the narrow thoroughfares leading to the heart of the turmoil, the sights and sounds of earnest occupation struck more forcibly on the senses. The streets were thronged with working-people. The hum of labour resounded from every house; lights gleamed from the long casement windows in the attic stories, and the whirl of wheels and noise of machinery shook the trembling walls. The fires, whose lurid sullen light had been visible for miles, blazed fiercely up in the great works and factories of the town. The din of hammers, the rushing of steam, and the dead heavy clanking of the engines, was the harsh music which arose from every quarter.

The postboy was driving briskly through the open streets and past the handsome and well-lighted shops which intervene between the outskirts of the town and the old Royal Hotel, before Mr Pickwick had begun to consider the very difficult and delicate nature of the commission which had carried him thither. . . .

The chaise stopped at the door of the Old Royal. Ben Allen having been partially awakened from a stupendous sleep, and dragged out by the collar by Mr Samuel Weller, Mr Pickwick was enabled to alight. They were shown to a comfortable apartment, and Mr Pickwick at once propounded a question to the waiter concerning the whereabout of Mr Winkle's residence.

"Close by, sir," said the waiter, "not above five hundred yards, sir. Mr Winkle is a wharfinger, sir, at the canal, sir. Private residence is not—oh dear no, sir, *not* five hundred yards, sir." Here the waiter blew a candle out, and made a feint of lighting it again, in order to afford Mr Pickwick an opportunity of asking any further questions, if he felt so disposed.

"Take anything now, sir?" said the waiter, lighting

the candle in desperation at Mr Pickwick's silence. "Tea or coffee, sir? Dinner, sir?"

"Nothing now."

"Very good, sir. Like to order supper, sir?"

"Not just now."

"*Very* good, sir." Here he walked softly to the door, and then stopping short, turned round, and said, with great suavity:

"Shall I send the chambermaid, gentlemen?"

"You may, if you please," replied Mr Pickwick.

"If *you* please, sir."

"And bring some soda water," said Bob Sawyer.

"Soda water, sir? Yes, sir." With his mind apparently relieved from an overwhelming weight, by having at last got an order for something, the waiter imperceptibly melted away. Waiters never walk or run. They have a peculiar and mysterious power of skimming out of rooms, which other mortals possess not.

The district of the Old Wharf is doubtless that in which the elder Mr Winkle resided, and the house almost adjacent to the Old Wharf at the corner of Easy Row and Edmund Street, which together with parts of the Old Wharf itself was demolished some years ago, used to be shown as Mr Winkle's house.

Dickens describes the house as follows:

About a quarter of a mile off, in a quiet, substantial-looking street, stood an old red-brick house with three steps before the door, and a brass plate upon it, bearing, in fat Roman capitals, the words, "Mr Winkle." The steps were very white, and the bricks were very red, and the house was very clean; and here stood Mr

Pickwick, Mr Benjamin Allen, and Mr Bob Sawyer, as the clock struck ten.

According to photographs, the demolished house at the corner of Easy Row had six steps before the door, whereas Mr Winkle's had only three, and another claimant has now come forward who occupies the premises at No. 11, which has the necessary three steps and therefore claims to be the original.

IV

The final stages in the last pilgrimage of Mr Pickwick were not unnaturally tinged with sadness, for Dickens was a master in the creation of a proper atmosphere. The mission to the elder Mr Winkle had not met with a successful issue, and " The morning which broke upon Mr Pickwick's sight, at eight o'clock, was not at all calculated to elevate his spirits, or to lessen the depression which the unlooked-for result of his embassy inspired. The sky was dark and gloomy, the air was damp and raw, the streets were wet and sloppy. The smoke hung sluggishly above the chimney-tops as if it lacked the courage to rise, and the rain came slowly and doggedly down, as if it had not even the spirit to pour."

The party waited the whole morning in the vain hope of seeing an improvement in the weather, and when noon had arrived without a change for the better, Mr Pickwick " rang the bell resolutely and ordered out the

chaise. Although the roads were miry, and the drizzling rain came down harder than it had done yet, and although the mud and wet splashed in at the open windows of the carriage to such an extent that the discomfort was almost as great to the pair of insides as to the pair of outsides, still there was something in the very motion, and the sense of being up and doing, which was so infinitely superior to being pent in a dull room, looking at the dull rain dripping into a dull street, that they all agreed, on starting, that the change was a great improvement, and wondered how they could possibly have delayed making it, as long as they had done."

The first stage was Coventry, eighteen miles on the road to London, and the stopping place was probably the Castle Hotel, where in later years, at a public dinner, Dickens was to be the recipient of a gold repeater watch, as a token of thanks, respect and regard for the Reading of *A Christmas Carol*, which he had given for the benefit of the Mechanics' Institute in December 1857.

When they stopped to change at Coventry, the steam ascended from the horses in such clouds as wholly to obscure the hostler, whose voice was however heard to declare from the mist, that he expected the first Gold Medal from the Humane Society on their next distribution of rewards, for taking the postboy's hat off; the water descending from the brim of which, the invisible gentleman declared, must inevitably have drowned him (the postboy), but for his great presence of mind in tearing it promptly from his head, and drying the gasping man's countenance with a wisp of straw.

The incident of the postboy prompted Sam Weller to enter upon a dissertation concerning the subject, by asking of Bob Sawyer—

"Wos you ever called in, ven you wos 'prentice to a sawbones, to wisit a postboy?"

"I don't remember that I ever was," replied Bob Sawyer.

"You never see a postboy in that 'ere hospital as you *walked* (as they says o' the ghosts), did you?" demanded Sam.

"No," replied Bob Sawyer. "I don't think I ever did."

"Never know'd a churchyard where there wos a postboy's tombstone, or see a dead postboy, did you?" inquired Sam, pursuing his catechism.

"No," rejoined Bob, "I never did."

"No!" rejoined Sam, triumphantly. "Nor never vill; and there's another thing that no man never see, and that's a dead donkey. No man never see a dead donkey, 'cept the gen'l'm'n in the black silk smalls as know'd the young 'ooman as kep a goat; and that wos a French donkey, so wery likely he warn't wun o' the reg'lar breed."

"Well, what has that got to do with the postboys?" asked Bob Sawyer.

"This here," replied Sam. "Without goin' so far as to as-sert, as some wery sensible people do, that postboys and donkeys is both immortal, wot I say is this: that wenever they feels theirselves gettin' stiff and past their work, they just rides off together, wun postboy to a pair in the usual way; wot becomes on 'em nobody knows, but it's wery probable as they starts avay to take their pleasure in some other vorld, for there ain't a man alive as ever see, either a donkey or a postboy, a takin' his pleasure in this!"

THE POMFRET ARMS, TOWCESTER
(FORMERLY THE SARACEN'S HEAD)

'They pulled up before the door of the Saracen's Head, Towcester. . . . "There's beds here, sir," said Sam addressing his master, "everything clean and comfortable. Very good little dinner, sir."'

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Expatiating upon this learned and remarkable theory, and citing many curious statistical and other facts in its support, Sam Weller beguiled the time until they reached Dunchurch, where a dry postboy and fresh horses were procured; the next stage was Daventry, and the next Towcester; and at the end of each stage it rained harder than it had done at the beginning.

No particulars are given of the stopping places at either Daventry or Dunchurch. Perhaps in such bad weather the name of the inn did not concern Mr Pickwick, especially as no lengthy stay was made at either place; and as to Bob Sawyer and Ben Allen, we should imagine that so long as the spirits were good and plenty, the name on the signboard outside mattered not at all.

Towcester, however, was to prove too much for all concerned, and here a stop for the night was made.

"I say," remonstrated Bob Sawyer, looking in at the coach window, as they pulled up before the door of the Saracen's Head, Towcester, "that won't do, you know."

"Bless me!" said Mr Pickwick, just awaking from a nap, "I'm afraid you're wet."

Bob Sawyer was indeed so wet that "his whole apparel shone so . . . that it might have been mistaken for a full set of prepared oilskin."

"I think it's quite impossible to go on to-night," interposed Ben.

"Out of the question, sir," remarked Sam Weller, coming to assist in the conference; "it's a cruelty to

animals, sir, to ask 'em to do it. There's beds here, sir," said Sam addressing his master, "everything clean and comfortable. Wery good little dinner, sir, they can get ready in half an hour—pair of fowls, sir, and a weal cutlet; French beans, 'taturs, tart, and tidiness. You'd better stop vere you are, sir, if I might recommend. Take adwice, sir, as the doctor said."

The host of the Saracen's Head opportunely appeared at this moment, to confirm Mr Weller's statement relative to the accommodations of the establishment, and to back his entreaties with a variety of dismal conjectures regarding the state of the roads, the doubt of fresh horses being to be had at the next stage, the dead certainty of its raining all night, the equally mortal certainty of its clearing up in the morning, and other topics of inducement familiar to innkeepers.

The Saracen's Head at Towcester has been known since 1831 as the Pomfret Arms, but, with this exception, it is the same inn as it was when the Pickwickians welcomed it as a haven.

"Lights in the Sun, John; make up the fire: the gentlemen are wet!" cried the landlord.

The candles were brought, the fire was stirred up, and a fresh log of wood thrown on. In ten minutes' time, a waiter was laying the cloth for dinner, the curtains were drawn, the fire was blazing brightly, and everything looked (as everything always does, in all decent English inns) as if the travellers had been expected, and their comforts prepared for days beforehand.

Here they encountered Mr Pott of the *Eatanswill*

Gazette, who was on his way to a Political Ball at Birmingham.

It was Sam who recognised him, when " glancing casually through a half-opened door, he was arrested by the sight of a gentleman with a sandy head who had a large bundle of newspapers lying on the table before him, and was perusing the leading article of one with a settled sneer which curled up his nose and all his other features into a majestic expression of haughty contempt."

" Hallo ! " said Sam, " I ought to know that 'ere head and them features; the eye-glass, too, and the broad-brimmed tile ! Eatansvill to vit, or I'm a Roman."

Sam was taken with a troublesome cough, at once, for the purpose of attracting the gentleman's attention; the gentleman starting at the sound, raised his head and his eye-glass, and disclosed to view the profound and thoughtful features of Mr Pott, of the *Eatanswill Gazette*.

He was heartily welcomed by Mr Pickwick, and " an agreement to club dinners together was at once made and ratified." The conversation naturally turned on the question of the rival paper, the *Independent*, and was only interrupted by the landlord and waiter entering with dinner.

Messrs Bob Sawyer and Benjamin Allen, who had irreverently fallen asleep during the reading of the quotation from the *Eatanswill Gazette*, and the discussion which followed it, were roused by the mere

whispering of the talismanic word "Dinner" in their ears: and to dinner they went with good digestion waiting on appetite, and health on both, and a waiter on all three.

In the course of the dinner and the sitting which succeeded it, Mr Pott descending, for a few moments, to domestic topics. . . .

While the great Mr Pott was dwelling upon this and other matters, enlivening the conversation from time to time with various extracts from his own lucubrations, a stern stranger, calling from the window of a stage-coach, outward bound, which halted at the inn to deliver packages, requested to know, whether, if he stopped short on his journey and remained there for the night, he could be furnished with the necessary accommodation of a bed and bedstead.

"Certainly, sir," replied the landlord. . . .

This gentleman was shown into the room originally assigned to the patriotic Mr Pott; and the waiter remarked, in dumb astonishment at the singular coincidence, that he had no sooner lighted the candles than the gentleman, diving into his hat, drew forth a newspaper, and began to read it with the very same expression of indignant scorn, which, upon the majestic features of Pott, had paralysed his energies an hour before. The man observed, too, that whereas Mr Pott's scorn had been roused by a newspaper headed the *Eatanswill Independent*, this gentleman's withering contempt was awakened by a newspaper entitled the *Eatanswill Gazette*.

Finding that there was no fire available at that time of night, save the kitchen fire, Mr Slurk decided to drink his rum and water there.

Now, some demon of discord, flying over the Saracen's Head at that moment, on casting down his eyes in mere idle curiosity, happened to behold Slurk established comfortably by the kitchen fire, and Pott slightly elevated with wine in another room; upon which the malicious demon, darting down into the last-mentioned apartment with inconceivable rapidity, passed at once into the head of Mr Bob Sawyer, and prompted him for his (the demon's) own evil purposes to speak as follows:

"I say, we've let the fire out. It's uncommonly cold after the rain, isn't it?"

"It really is," replied Mr Pickwick, shivering.

"It wouldn't be a bad notion to have a cigar by the kitchen fire, would it?" said Bob Sawyer, still prompted by the demon aforesaid.

"It would be particularly comfortable, *I* think," replied Mr Pickwick. "Mr Pott, what do you say?"

Mr Pott yielded a ready assent; and all four travellers, each with his glass in his hand, at once betook themselves to the kitchen, with Sam Weller heading the procession to show them the way.

The stranger was still reading; he looked up and started. Mr Pott started.

"What's the matter?" whispered Mr Pickwick.

"That reptile!" replied Pott.

"What reptile?" said Mr Pickwick, looking about him for fear he should tread on some overgrown black beetle, or dropsical spider.

"That reptile," whispered Pott, catching Mr Pickwick by the arm, and pointing towards the stranger. "That reptile Slurk, of the *Independent*!"

"Perhaps we had better retire," whispered Mr Pickwick.

"Never, sir," rejoined Pott, pot-valiant in a double sense, "never." With these words, Mr Pott took up his position on an opposite settle, and selecting one from

a little bundle of newspapers, began to read against his enemy.

Mr Pott, of course, read the *Independent*, and Mr Slurk, of course, read the *Gazette;* and each gentleman audibly expressed his contempt of the other's compositions by bitter laughs and sarcastic sniffs; whence they proceeded to more open expressions of opinion, such as "absurd," "wretched," "atrocity," "humbug," "knavery," "dirt," "filth," "slime," "ditch-water," and other critical remarks of the like nature.

These and similar epithets naturally resulted in some very hot blood, which culminated in Mr Slurk attacking Mr Pott with "his carpet-bag, which was well stuffed with moveables."

"Gentlemen," cried Mr Pickwick, as Pott started up and seized the fire-shovel, "gentlemen! Consider, for Heaven's sake—help—Sam—here—pray, gentlemen—interfere, somebody."

Uttering these incoherent exclamations, Mr Pickwick rushed between the infuriated combatants just in time to receive the carpet-bag on one side of his body, and the fire-shovel on the other. Whether the representatives of the public feeling of Eatanswill were blinded by animosity, or (being both acute reasoners) saw the advantage of having a third party between them to bear all the blows, certain it is that they paid not the slightest attention to Mr Pickwick, but defying each other with great spirit, plied the carpet-bag and the fire-shovel most fearlessly. Mr Pickwick would unquestionably have suffered severely for his humane interference, if Mr Weller, attracted by his master's cries, had not rushed in at the moment, and, snatching up a meal-sack, effectually stopped the conflict by drawing it over

THE ENCOUNTER AT THE SARACEN'S HEAD AT TOWCESTER

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the head and shoulders of the mighty Pott, and clasping him tight round the shoulders.

This proved effective, and "the rival editors were severally removed to their beds by the landlord, under the inspection of Mr Bob Sawyer and Mr Benjamin Allen; breathing, as they went away, many sanguinary threats, and making vague appointments for mortal combat next day. When they came to think it over, however, it occurred to them that they could do it much better in print, so they recommenced deadly hostilities without delay; and all Eatanswill rung with their boldness—on paper.

"They had taken themselves off in separate coaches, early next morning, before the other travellers were stirring; and the weather having now cleared up, the chaise companions once more turned their faces to London."

The papers of the Pickwick Club are silent as to the journey home; all we know is that on their arrival in London, "Mr Pickwick proposed that he and Sam should alight in the neighbourhood of the George and Vulture, and that the two young men should for the present take up their quarters elsewhere. To this they very readily agreed, and the proposition was accordingly acted upon; Mr Ben Allen and Mr Bob Sawyer betaking themselves to a sequestered pot-shop on the remotest confines of the Borough, behind the bar-door of which their names had in other days very often appeared, at the head of long and complex calculations worked in white chalk."

. . . . . .

Thus ended the Pickwick Pilgrimages. Mr Pickwick retired to a house at Dulwich, and the Club was dis-

solved. His decision that "no new journeys were to be undertaken," and intention to retire from public life, were duly notified to his select circle of friends gathered at Mr Wardle's table at "Osborne's Hotel in the Adelphi," now the Adelphi Hotel.

"I shall never regret having devoted the greater part of two years to mixing with different varieties and shades of human character: frivolous as my pursuit of novelty may have appeared to many. Nearly the whole of my previous life having been devoted to business and the pusuit of wealth, numerous scenes of which I had no previous conception have dawned upon me—I hope to the enlargement of my mind, and the improvement of my understanding. If I have done but little good, I trust I have done less harm, and that none of my adventures will be other than a source of amusing and pleasant recollection to me in the decline of life. God bless all!"

With these words, Mr Pickwick filled and drained a bumper with a trembling hand, and his eyes moistened as his friends rose with one accord, and pledged him from their hearts.

WHERE THE PILGRIMAGES ENDED

'Osborne's Hotel in the Adelphi.'

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MR. PICKWICK'S PILGRIMAGES

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